

IDB meeting opens today

AMMAN (I.T.) — The 10th annual conference of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) board of governors opens in Amman on Saturday under Royal patronage. Finance Ministers from 43 Islamic countries will discuss over two days the bank's financing operations during the last fiscal year and will look into the bank's final accounts and proposals and recommendations of a special committee. The board will also review a report drawn up by executive directors on economic and commercial cooperation among member states of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). All members of the 46-nation OIC are expected to be represented in the meeting.

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Arab wounded in blast near Tel Aviv

TEL AVIV (AP) — A bomb exploded by a bus stop in a small town near here Friday wounding an Arab, police said. The bomb in Kfar Saba, 25 kilometres north-east of Tel Aviv, blew off the hand of the worker, police said. Israel Radio identified the wounded man as Ahmad Juma and said the package he was removing from the sidewalk exploded when he touched it. There were no further details.

Shara'a returns home from Tehran

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Shara'a returned home on Friday from a brief visit to Tehran during which he delivered a letter from Syrian President Hafiz Al Assad to his Iranian counterpart, Ali Khamenei, the official Syrian News Agency (SANA) reported. Neither government disclosed the contents of the message or whether Mr. Shara'a discussed Syrian allegations of Iraqi involvement in a car bombing in Damascus last Thursday. SANA quoted Mr. Shara'a as saying before taking off from Tehran's Mehrabad airport that he was satisfied with his talks in the Iranian capital. Tehran Radio quoted Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati as saying after Mr. Shara'a's visit that representatives of Iran, Syria and Libya may hold a conference in the next few weeks.

Soviet cargo craft docks in space

MOSCOW (AP) — The supply craft Progress-25 docked on Friday with the manned orbiting space lab Mir, the official news agency TASS reported. The Progress is carrying fuel, food, water and other supplies necessary for long-term functioning of the Mir, which was launched on Feb. 20 as a "new generation" station that will form the core for a permanently manned complex. Mir is the Russian word for peace.

Sino-Soviet talks said to be positive

PEKING (AP) — Soviet First Deputy Premier Ivan Arkhipov and Chinese Vice-Premier Li Peng on Friday described their talks on economic and technological issues as positive, but did not comment on their countries' political relations. Mr. Arkhipov, interviewed by reporters as he boarded a plane at the Peking airport to return to Moscow, declined to give any details on an agreement by the two sides to expand bilateral exchanges.

Panama rejects asylum for Marcos

PANAMA CITY (R) — The government of Panama has rejected a request for asylum from deposed Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, presidential press secretary Guillermo Adames said Friday. Adames said the decision was made late Thursday after a private meeting among President Eric Arturo Delvalle, his cabinet ministers and other top government officials.

INSIDE

- Karami seeks papal role to secure Israeli withdrawal, page 2
- Jordan marks anniversary of Karamah battle, page 3
- New information order and national interests Vs. people's liberty, page 4
- Did the Trojan war really take place, page 5
- Egypt takes African Nations Cup, page 6
- OPEC meeting may end inconclusively, page 7
- Police, extremist Sikhs clash at Punjab assembly, page 8

No change in Jordan's stand on PLO after King-Mubarak talks

By Salameh B. Ne'matt
with agency dispatches

AMMAN — A senior Jordanian official said on Friday that there was no change in Jordan's position vis-a-vis the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) following Jordanian-Egyptian summit talks in Cairo on Thursday.

The official said that "nothing exceptional" was reached during the Cairo talks between His Majesty King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and that the talks focused on ways to "unify Arab ranks".

"There are no breakthroughs regarding the PLO," the official told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview. "Our position is very clear. There have been no changes."

The official said he was not aware of any connection between King Hussein's talks in Cairo and the reportedly planned visit to Cairo on Saturday by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. "He (Mr.

Arafat) goes there regularly... it has nothing to do with our talks in Egypt," said the official.

The King was quoted as saying on Thursday that efforts for finding a just and durable settlement for the Middle East problems must be based on the principle of a just and equitable solution for all sides.

"We have had a very serious setback and reached a dead end so to speak," for the time being, the King was said to have told reporters at the end of his meeting with President Mubarak. "It is a period of reflection for all those concerned in the area," the King said. He was apparently referring to Jordan's decision last month to terminate political coordination

with the leadership of the PLO. The King's meeting with President Mubarak was the first since last October. The two leaders had a closed meeting which lasted for 90 minutes before they were joined by aides for an enlarged meeting at Al Qubbah Presidential Palace in Cairo. The meeting was attended on the Jordanian side by Prime Minister Zaid Rifai, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Oqash, Court Minister Adnan Abu Odeh and Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief General Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker.

Upon returning to Amman, King Hussein sent a cable to President Mubarak voicing appreciation for the hospitality accorded to the Jordanian delegation during the visit. He said he was impressed by the consistency in Cairo and which he said were focused on issues of concern to the Arab Nation, according to the Jordanian News Agency, Petra.

In his cable, King Hussein described the talks in Cairo as another stage in the long endeavours designed to serve the peoples of the Arab Nation.

Egypt said to believe Abu Nidal was behind attack on Israelis

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Egypt believes an arm of the radical Palestinian faction led by Abu Nidal, carried out a shooting attack in Cairo in which an Israeli woman was killed and three Israelis wounded, an Israeli official said on Friday.

Egyptian officials say the Abu Nidal group also was behind two other shootings of Israelis in Egypt in two years, said the official, who spoke to the Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

A group calling itself "Egypt's Revolution" claimed responsibility both for the previous shootings and Wednesday's attack on four Israelis near Cairo's International Trade Fair.

The official said Egypt believes that this group "is an arm of Abu Nidal," which is a code name for Sabri Al Banna, a Palestinian who split from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) more than a decade ago.

Israeli Prime Minister Peres' office said Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has expressed sorrow to Peres over the killing. It said Mr. Mubarak sent a message pledging to find those responsible for the shooting.

Israeli Tourism Minister Avraham Shafir, who met Mr. Mubarak in Cairo on Thursday, delivered the message.

An editorial in the leading Egyptian state-owned newspaper Al Ahram on Friday condemned the shooting.

"It was a mean crime by all standards. Any attempt to explain it away politically or ideologically would be futile and unconvincing because the victims, innocent civilians, did not commit an offense by coming to Cairo and participating in pushing the peace process between Egypt and Israel."

Peres said on Thursday Israel remained committed to strengthening peace with Egypt despite the attack.

"We will continue the dialogue with Egypt in spite of the pain, because there is no alternative," Peres told reporters in Tel Aviv.

"We are not going to lose heart and submit to the attempt to bring an end to any hopes for peace and accommodation and security in the Middle East," Peres said.

Peres said he hoped Egypt would take "measures to prevent the chance of any further tragic act." But he made clear Israel understood the problems facing President Mubarak.

Police said Wednesday night's ambush was carried out with two cars. One car blocked the Israeli blue embassy Peugeot while gunmen blazed away from the other with automatic rifles. Both cars sped away after the shooting and the Egyptian police have launched a major manhunt.

Weinberger: U.S. will not accept any control on SDI

WUERZBURG, West Germany (R) — U.S. Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger insisted on Friday that America would not give up its strategic defence initiative (SDI) in any arms control agreement or accept a ban on nuclear testing.

After a nuclear planning meeting of NATO defence ministers in the Bavarian town, Mr. Weinberger told reporters the so-called "Star Wars" space defence programme was "one of the very highest priorities of our government."

He said rapid technical progress made him confident that SDI research would yield a defence system against Soviet intercontinental and medium-range nuclear missiles.

Rebuffing Soviet proposals for a nuclear test ban, Mr. Weinberger said testing would remain necessary as long as the West relied on atomic weapons and until SDI provided a defence shield.

The 14 NATO ministers made no direct mention of SDI or nuclear testing in their communiqué but expressed strong support for the U.S. stance in the Geneva arms control talks.

Mr. Weinberger said he expected West Germany to sign an SDI participation agreement next week very similar to last December's U.S. accord with Britain.

But Bonn Defence Minister Manfred Woerner declined to confirm this, saying he did not wish to preempt final negotiations.

Howe urges Greece to preserve NATO unity

ATHENS (R) — Britain's Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe said on Friday that Athens played a vital role in NATO and had to help preserve solidarity within the alliance.

"In an apparent reference to territorial and other disagreements in the Aegean between NATO partners Greece and Turkey, Mr. Howe, who is visiting Greece, said members should avoid disputes among themselves."

"Greece, like Britain, must help to preserve the chain of strategic consensus and political solidarity," he said in a speech at a luncheon of the British-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce.

Greece considers Turkey as the main military threat against it and has excluded dialogue with Ankara as long as Turkish troops, which invaded Cyprus in 1974, remain on the island.

Mr. Howe told Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu in talks earlier on Friday that the latest United Nations efforts to solve the Cyprus problem represented the best opportunity for the island, the British minister's spokesman told reporters.

But Greek sources said that although Athens still wanted to settle Cyprus through the U.N., it considered that the organisation's newest plan was badly prepared.

Greek government officials contended that a bad solution would reward Turkey for its invasion of Cyprus and encourage it to act against Greek islands.



Her Majesty Queen Zein, the Queen Mother, attends a ceremony at the Al Hussein Sports City on Friday to mark Mother's Day. The children in the picture are from the Umm Al Hussein Orphanage (Petra photo)

Queen Zein patronises Mother's Day festivities

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother, patronised celebrations to mark Mother's Day on Friday by the Umm Al Hussein Orphanage at Al Hussein Sports City.

Upon her arrival at the Sports City, Queen Zein, who was accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Taghreed, was received by the chairwoman of the orphanage, members of teaching staff as well as students of the orphanage in addition to a number of women.

The secretary of the Umm Al Hussein Orphanage, Ehsan Al Zabin, delivered a speech congratulating the Queen Mother on the occasion of Mother's Day and praised her activities in support of the women's movement in Jordan.

Ms. Zabin also paid tribute to Queen Zein's continuing support for the orphanage and her efforts in supporting any charitable society which contributes to the march, progress and prosperity of Jordan.

One of the orphanage students also delivered speech in which he hailed Queen Zein and congratulated her on the occasion of Mother's Day and expressed gratitude to the Queen Mother for her sympathy.

The Queen Mother then made a donation of JD 1,000 for the children and employees of the orphanage. A number of Jordanian women and wives of ambassadors also donated various amounts in support of the orphanage to enable it offer its services and care to orphan students throughout the country. The celebrations were attended by Sharifah Fatimah Nasser, chairwoman of the orphanage society, the prime minister's wife and the wife of the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament.

Arafat blames U.S. for 'dead end' in peace efforts

ABU DHABI (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said on Friday the current U.S. attitude made a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict impossible.

Mr. Arafat told Reuters in an interview he agreed with a statement on Thursday in Cairo by King Hussein that peace efforts had reached a dead end.

"I share his opinion that the wheels of peace have reached a dead end, given this hostile American position and unlimited support for Israel and its occupation of Arab lands."

"Faced with this Israeli-American arrogance and stubbornness there cannot be a chance to find a just, complete peace in the region," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Arafat arrived in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Wednesday on his first tour of the Gulf since Jordan decided to end political coordination with PLO.

Mr. Arafat was to leave for Cairo on Friday for talks with a top United Nations official, a senior PLO source said in Cairo.

Mr. Arafat said King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, whom he saw earlier this week, and UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ibn Sultan Al Nahayan had reaffirmed their financial support for the PLO and were keen to promote the Palestinian effort in all its aspects, including Palestinian-Jordanian relations.

On the future of relations with Jordan, Mr. Arafat said only that both sides were committed to the 1982 Fez Arab peace plan, which calls for an independent Palestinian state.

"We consider it (the Fez plan) the foundation on which to find peace, not Israeli or American conditions," he said.

Mr. Arafat said his talks with Sheikh Zayed had also covered the 5 1/2-year-old Iran-Iraq war, which he described as a great danger to the Palestinian cause.

In Cairo, the PLO chairman was to meet Marrack Gouding, U.N.

Terrorism, hostages top Chirac's priorities

PARIS (Agencies) — Mideast-linked terrorism and the freeing of French hostages in Lebanon were top priorities on Friday for France's new government, with Prime Minister Jacques Chirac "bored by the bestial, inhuman" Paris bombing which coincided with his appointment.

A terrorist group which has claimed a series of bombings in Paris said Friday it set the bomb which killed two people and wounded 28 in a crowded Champs Elysees shopping gallery Thursday evening, as Mr. Chirac was making his first nationwide broadcast following his appointment as prime minister.

The attack, and a potentially lethal nail-bomb defused in a subway station, overtook Mr. Chirac's announced priority of urgent action on domestic economic issues.

At a news conference on Friday, held weekly by Mr. Chirac, who remains mayor of Paris, the new prime minister called for an intensive increase in security measures, particularly searches in public places and major reinforcement of international cooperation against terrorism.

Mr. Chirac's first act after taking over as prime minister Thursday night from the outgoing Laurent Fabius, was to visit the site of Thursday's bomb attack.

Action against urban guerrillas was expected to be among the matters discussed at the new RPR/UDF conservative government's first cabinet meeting in the Elysee Palace on Saturday under Socialist President Mitterrand (See page 4).

The historic session will mark another step in a "cohabitation" unprecedented since General Charles de Gaulle founded the Fifth Republic in 1958.

On Friday, Mr. Chirac's first distinguished foreign visitor was scheduled to be United States Secretary of State George Shultz, here at the start of a four-nation European tour.

Not only is Mr. Chirac faced with a ideologically hostile president and a fragile majority, but the lives of at least seven Frenchmen held by extremists in Lebanon remain at risk. Their kidnappers demand a change in France's Middle East policy (See page 2).

(Continued on page 5)

2 senior SLA men killed

TEL AVIV (AP) — Two senior officers of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia were killed by commandos near their headquarters in South Lebanon, Israel Radio reported Friday. A United Nations source in Lebanon confirmed that three people were killed Wednesday when a roadside bomb exploded next to a convoy, including military vehicles of the SLA militia. The bomb blast occurred about eight kilometres north of the Israeli border near Marjayoun, the headquarters of the Israeli-trained and-financed SLA. Israel Radio said the dead men were on their way to a meeting with militia commander General Antoine Lahd when the blast occurred. The U.N. source also said an Israeli-allied militiaman killed one commando on Thursday near Marjayoun, southwest of Marjayoun. Israel says it withdrew the bulk of its troops last June from South Lebanon.

Sharif Zaid offers assistance to Sudan

AMMAN (I.T.-AP-Petra) — In the interest of Arab unity, Jordan is ready to help Sudan in any way it can, including military assistance. Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief General Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker was quoted as saying on Friday.

The Sudanese newspaper Al Ayan quoted Gen. Sharif Zaid as saying Jordan's offer of assistance covers "military or other assistance."

Gen. Sharif Zaid spoke to the newspaper during a three-day visit to Sudan. He flew to Egypt on Thursday and afterwards to Amman with His Majesty King Hussein who paid a short visit to Cairo for talks with President Hosni Mubarak.

Al Ayan quoted Gen. Sharif Zaid as saying "Jordan is committed to assist (Sudan) within the limits of its capabilities and from the springboard of Arab unity."

He said such support can be provided "without having to sign protocol."

During his visit to Sudan, Gen. Sharif Zaid was received by Gen. Abdul Rahman Swareddahab, head of Sudan's ruling military council. He also held talks with Sudanese Prime Minister Jazouli Dafa'allah.

Gen. Swareddahab, in his talks with Gen. Sharif Zaid, praised the King and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan for supporting Sudan and hailed Jordan's position towards the famine-hit country, the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, reported. Gen. Sharif Zaid also visited Sudanese military positions.

Arab League marks 41st anniversary

AMMAN (Petra) — Today, Saturday, marks the 41st anniversary of the establishment of the Arab League. In March 1945, the Arab League's Charter was drawn up and defined the league as an organisation aimed at strengthening ties among Arab countries and coordinating political plans to achieve cooperation among them, preserving their independence and sovereignty.

The league works through several bodies in the form of councils and committees at the top of which is the league council, which groups representatives of member countries. The council is entrusted with achieving the goals of the Arab League as well as observing the implementation of agreements signed among member countries in various fields. The council also assumes a mediatory role in disputes among league members.

Since its establishment, the Arab League has been active in various fields to achieve cooperation among Arab countries and has been able, on many occasions, to make its presence felt in the international scene.

Arab organisations and unions and joint Arab companies in Amman issued a statement on Friday on the occasion of the league's anniversary. The statement said that the establishment of the Arab League has contributed to a great extent to strengthening ties among Arab countries and underscoring the inevitability of Arab solidarity in the face of all challenges and in defence of the Arabs' existence and future.

Iraq says 6 peaks recaptured in north

BAHRAIN (R) — Iraq said on Friday it had recaptured six mountain peaks on the northern Gulf war front as Iran reported another artillery attack on Iraq's main naval base.

In Baghdad, a high command communiqué said Iraqi troops, aided by Kurdish fighters and backed by artillery, had won back six border peaks in the Penjwin area. It said Iran had had "a foothold" on the peaks since 1983.

The Iranian news agency IRNA reported exchanges of fire in several areas, including Penjwin, during which it said some Iraqi bunkers and observation posts were destroyed.

IRNA, quoting another Iranian military communiqué, said Iranian forces subjected the jetties at Iraq's main naval base at Umm Al Qasr, on the southern front, to artillery fire which caused "considerable casualties and losses."

Teburan Radio reported on Tuesday that Iranian artillery fire had damaged the naval base and jetties beyond repair. An Iraqi military source denied the claim as "totally false."

Umm Al Qasr, 50 kilometres west of Basra, Iraq's second city, is linked to the northern Gulf by a waterway which passes the southern tip of the Fao Peninsula, the site of an Iranian offensive now in its sixth week.

On the northern front, the Iraqi communiqué said the whole of the Penjwin basin, 10 kilometres from the Iranian border, was "under the complete protection and supervision of our troops."

The communiqué said Iraqi forces, exploiting victories in Chwarta area of the northern front, won back the peaks during a fierce battle.

Iraq said a week ago it had recaptured all territory lost in an Iranian cross-border thrust in the Chwarta area, northeast of the provincial capital of Sulaymaniyeh.

Clandestine group claims Paris explosion, demands release of 5 prisoners

BEIRUT (AP) — An underground leftist group claimed responsibility on Friday for the bomb explosion that killed two persons and wounded 28 others in Paris and threatened to stage similar bombings in Rome.

The "Committee for the Defence of Arab and Middle Eastern Political Prisoners in Europe" made its claim in a type-written statement delivered to an international news agency in Beirut.

"Freedom for Georges Ibrahim Abdallah, Varoujan Garibedian and Anis Naccache — or more bombs and victims in the streets of Paris," the statement said. The three are held in French prisons.

A bomb blast on Thursday, as Jacques Chirac took office as France's new prime minister, killed two men and wounded 29 other people in a shopping arcade in central Paris.

A second device has defused in the city's Chatelet metro station. The same group claimed responsibility for a bomb blast in a high-speed train travelling south from Paris on Monday.

It demanded the release of the three prisoners jailed in Paris and two others in Rome as the "sole condition to stop our blows."

Naccache led a five-man assassination squad that attempted to kill former Iranian Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar in Paris in July, 1980. He is serving a life prison sentence.

Abdallah is suspected leader of the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Front, which was arrested in Lyon in October, 1984. He was convicted of minor charges related to forged identity papers and is being held for further investigation.

Garibedian, a member of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, convicted in the July 7, 1983, bombing of the Turkish Airlines ticket counter at Paris' Orly airport. Seven people were killed and 55 others injured in the attack. Garibedian also is serving a life sentence.

The statement identified the two prisoners in Rome as Josephine Abdo Sarkis and Abdallah.

It demanded the release of the

(Continued on page 5)

Prince Hassan, Pakistani delegation visit army unit

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Thursday attended a celebration held by the 12th Royal Mechanized Division to mark Prince Hassan's 39th birthday.

Present with Prince Hassan was the commander of the Prince Hassan Battalion of the Pakistan Armed Forces, now on a visit to Jordan at the head of a military delegation.

Prince Hassan inspected the troops and then a ceremony was held to hand over the standard of one of the division's units to the Pakistani battalion. The commander of the Pakistani battalion made a speech on the twinning of the two battalions and he said that this link illustrates the strong ties between the armed forces and the peoples of both countries.

The twinning was carried out

upon the directives of Prince Hassan. At the end of the visit, the commanders of the Jordanian and Pakistani units presented gifts to Prince Hassan on his 39th birthday.

Later, Prince Hassan, accompanied by Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ibn Zaid, attended a sports festival which included contests in running, jumping, tug-of-war, discus throwing and other athletic events. The commander of the Jordanian battalion distributed awards and medals to the winners.

The Pakistani delegation, which will leave Jordan on Sunday, will meet with Prince Hassan, Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri and Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply, Rajai Al Muasher on Saturday.

Haddadin outlines JVA activities

AMMAN (Petra) — Government expenditure on the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) has been JD 182.8 million, divided between the two phases, in addition to JD 20.8 million for capital and operational expenses and JD 17.5 million to cover recurrent costs, including staff salaries, allowances and other costs, JVA President Munther Haddadin has said.

In an interview with the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, Dr. Haddadin said the JVA was established in 1977 to be responsible for developing the Jordan Valley region both economically and socially. To achieve this, the JVA had to develop water resources in the Jordan Valley and exploit them for agricultural, household and industrial purposes, in addition to generating electricity. The authority also had to develop, protect and improve the environment and conditions in the valley to perform all relevant works such as studies, designs and construction for road networks, including all main and village roads.

Dr. Haddadin also said the JVA has tried to develop tourism and define tourist sites and attractions and to establish tourist and recreational facilities. Also, the JVA has established national institutions to contribute effectively to developing the valley.

Speaking about the authority's achievements, Dr. Haddadin said that it completed the construction of the King Talal Dam in 1980 which is used to irrigate an area of 17,000 dunums and has also extended the East Ghor Canal by 18 kilometres to increase the area of irrigated land by 37,000 dunums.

Dr. Haddadin explained that the JVA's projects were divided into two stages; the first costing JD 89.3 million, of which JD 79.5 were government expenditure, JD 5 million capital and operational expenses and JD 4.8 million recurrent costs. Costs of the second stage amounted to JD 131.8 million, of which JD 103.3 million were government expenditure and JD 15.8 million capital and operational costs and JD 12.7 million were recurrent costs.

Phase one

Projects in the first phase covered the water resources sector and these cost JD 25.7 million of which JD 17 million was from foreign financiers. Projects in this sector included: The King Talal Dam, which has a storage capacity of 56 million cubic metres, protecting ground water reserves, preparations for the construction of Maqaret Dam and conducting feasibility studies in addition to technical studies.

Projects for irrigation and drainage cost some JD 21 million, JD 12 million of which came through foreign financiers. Projects in this sector included an extension of 18 kilometres to the East Ghor Canal, the Zarqa River project, the Husban-Kafrair irrigation project, the north-east Jordan Valley irrigation project, the Wadi

Arba irrigation project, supply of irrigation equipment, ground drainage and feasibility and technical studies for the south Jordan Valley project.

The rural development and public utilities sector cost JD 30.6 million and projects in this sector included: the organisation of cities and villages, construction of schools, health centres, government departments, complexes, housing, electricity and construction of roads.

The JVA has built 74 schools, including 1,184 classrooms catering for some 32,600 students. The authority also built 15 health centres and 13 government department compounds. In the field of housing the first stage witnessed the construction of 1,888 housing units and offered facilities for those wishing to utilise these units. In tourism, the JVA has undertaken a study aimed at developing tourism in the Jordan Valley and south Jordan Valley and Wadi Arba and has defined historical sites and tourist attractions, Dr. Haddadin continued.

In the agricultural field, the authority's role was restricted to constructing some factories and marketing centres, such as the Arida marketing centre.

Phase two

In the second phase, the JVA spent JD 38 million on water resources including the expansion of the King Talal Dam and raising its storage capacity of 90 million cubic metres. The authority also built the Wadi Arba dam, implemented the Amman-Deir Alla water project, conducted designs and studies for Karameh dam and the Mukheibah-Adasieh canal.

In the field of rural development, the JVA has constructed and furnished 16 schools in the south Jordan Valley, a rural hospital in Al Safi village and a government department compound. It has also connected four villages to the electricity grid. In the field of industry and agricultural services, the JVA spent JD 10.4 million on three marketing centres in Wadi Al Yabis, South Shouneh and Safi, in addition to two wooden box factories in Arida and Yabis and two tom-

Then and now

Dr. Haddadin then went on to compare the situation in the Jordan Valley in 1973, before the establishment of the JVA, and the situation in 1984. He said that between 1973 and 1984, population increased from 64,000 to 145,000 and the number of school children from 12,000 to 32,000. The number of houses in the Jordan Valley increased from 11,000 to 26,000 and the number of health centres from 2 to 15.

The comparison also revealed that in 1973 only 10 per cent of the population had access to water and electricity while in 1984 100 per cent and 90 per cent respectively had access to water and electricity.

The number of banks jumped from one to nine and the number of municipal and village councils rose from 3 to 39, Dr. Haddadin continued. The production of vegetables and fruits also jumped significantly and the production value rose from JD 5.5 million in 1973 to JD 52 million in 1984, he said.

Dr. Haddadin added that the JVA has recently been in charge of providing drinking water for some governorates. As a result of a meeting held on June 14, 1979 under the chairmanship of His Majesty King Hussein and attended by the prime minister and other officials, it was decided that the Amman-Azraq water supply project be implemented as a quick solution to the water crisis in Amman. It was also decided that a bigger project be implemented to meet the increasing demand for water in all villages and cities from Wala in the south to Zarqa river in the north. Hopes were then pinned to the construction of Maqaret dam on the Yarmouk. In a subsequent meeting it was decided that the JVA be entrusted with carrying out this project, the JVA president said.

Dr. Haddadin added that the JVA has spent JD 66.5 million on water supply projects during the period from 1973 to 1984.

GUVS assembly thanks King for his contribution to social welfare

AMMAN (Petra) — The General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) has voiced its deep appreciation to His Majesty King Hussein for his contribution to the success of the union's work.

The union also thanked the Ministry of Labour and Social Development for its contribution to GUVS and the assistance it extends to voluntary organisations in Jordan.

During the meeting of the GUVS General Assembly on Thursday, the administrative report was approved and the final

accounts for last year were endorsed. Some amendments to the union's statute were made to allow a representative from each of the three newly established governorates to join the union.

GUVS President Abdullah Al Khatib, who chaired the meeting which was attended by representatives of 60,000 volunteers working through 550 charitable societies including nine unions on the West Bank, said social work is prompted by the feeling that human contribution is of significant importance.

Music of words, magic of silence

By Najwa Najjar
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "La Musica," starring Gaynor Peridakis, Philippe Le Gal, and Marie-Madeleine Mubaiden and written by the famous French writer Marguerite Duras, is a story of a relationship between a man and a woman.

After seven years of marriage and two years of separation they meet by chance at a play, a few hours before their divorce is to be finalised.

When the play begins the audience does not know anything about the actors lives. Nor is their curiosity satisfied as the play progresses. All that is discovered is that he is an architect and loves his work and she does not work and will be going to the United States after the divorce. Also both live with different people.

Very simple words are used during the play, "La Musica" is the music of words and the magic of

silence. For Duras there are only bodies and words, said Philippe Le Gal, who in addition to acting produced the play. Relationships are based on words and silence; the distance between the characters can not be described except by the silences between them, he said.

"La Musica" is not a theatrical play as we understand it. There is absolutely no action. Before it is a play it is a text. "Every word must be listened to, and even for French people it is not so easy to understand because there are no concrete elements," said Philippe. The words though simple are full of violence. And even though one word can end the play, the word is not uttered until the end. The game which lovers play is like music going up and down, said Philippe. It may indicate that even people who are about to be divorced need one word, one smile, one physical movement to know

that they exist, he added.

New elements

Philippe introduces new elements in "La Musica." There is experimentation with lights, video, and a singer. The singer is a semi-break between the scenes and at the same time she sings of love, and tragedy so if one wants to escape he is pulled back by the melody, said Philippe.

This is the second play done by local actors at the French Cultural Centre. At the opening night on Thursday, there were approximately 50 people. Reactions were mixed after the play, noted Philippe which did not seem to surprise him since it was a difficult play to understand. Tickets are JD 1 for adults, and 500 fils for students at the French Cultural Centre. The last performance will be tonight at 8:00 p.m. at the French Cultural Centre.

Jordan marks 18th anniversary of battle at Karameh

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan Friday celebrated the 18th anniversary of the Battle of Karameh during which the Jordanian Armed Forces repelled an Israeli invasion across the River Jordan and won a decisive victory.

Armed Forces Commander in Chief General Sharif Zaid Ibn Shaker patronised the main ceremony to mark the occasion and this was held near the Unknown Soldier's Monument where the historic battle took place. The Armed Forces commander, together with high-ranking officers, laid wreaths at the Martyr's Monument.

At the outset of the ceremony, the Armed Forces mufti delivered a speech in which he praised the

Jordanian forces and servicemen on their heroic fight in 1968 and paid tribute to the martyrs who fell during the battle. Following the speech, buglers played the beat of the last retreat and the crowd prayed for the martyrs' souls.

Jordan Television earlier screened a documentary on the battle during which martyrs' names were read out and high-ranking officers, who took part in the battle, reviewed accounts of the fight.

The Armed Forces, side by side

with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), fought in the battle to defeat the Israelis.

Attending the ceremony were Balqa Governor Mehim Khr-eisha, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Fathi Abu Taleb, the mayor of Shuneh, and high-ranking officers.

Later in the day, crowds of students visited the battle site and laid wreaths on the Unknown Soldier's Monument.

In a recent interview with the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, Jordan Valley Authority President Munther Haddadin said that the authority was planning to set up a huge dam to be named after the Battle of Karameh. He said that the authority is exploring means to conserve rain water in the valley during winter.

JPA okays financial, administrative reports

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian Press Association (JPA) held an ordinary meeting Friday and approved the association's financial and administrative reports.

The meeting, chaired by JPA President Mahmoud Al Kayed, discussed different issues pertaining to the Jordanian press including the freedom of the press, a housing project for Jordanian journalists and a pension fund for retired journalists.

The council's administrative report said that the council had recently met with Prime Minister Zaid Al Rifai who showed understanding about the demands and needs of the Jordanian press.

The association also discussed the recent change in status of the Jordan Press Foundation, which owns Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times, into a public share holding company. Some journalists pointed out that the change, which is also expected to apply to other newspapers, could harm the interests of journalists since the new owners would not necessarily be journalists. The JPA approved a recommendation to designate the council to follow this issue in order to make sure that journalists' interests would not be affected by the process.

Some new members of the JPA protested that their applications to be included in the housing plan were rejected. But council members explained that the rejection was based on "technical bases" and they promised to continue efforts to include all association members in the housing project.

Pensions

The journalists also expressed



JPA President Mahmoud al Kayed (second from left) presides over Friday's annual session of the Jordanian Press Association which was held at the Professional Associations Complex in Shmeisani.

concern about the fact that retired journalists are not entitled to a Pension Fund. But the JPA administrative report said that a draft pension system for journalists has been referred to the Information Ministry and the Prime Ministry and is expected to be enacted as a law soon.

Several journalists called on the council to help journalists working for the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, by cancelling the law which prevents them from working for the local newspapers.

The JPA then endorsed a recommendation that the council should seek a change of the law to allow Petra reporters and editors to work for local newspapers and publications.

The JPA administrative report also said that the association had accepted the membership of 28 journalists and that there were 14 new journalists who registered as trainees.

The journalists also approved the association's financial report which showed that the JPA had cleared all of its debts but that it had not collected all of its share of

Payments due

According to the JPA council's estimates the three main newspaper publishing companies owed the association JD 16,000 in 1984. (The Jordan Press Foundation JD 7,000; the Jordan Company for Press and Publications, which owns Al Dastour and The Jerusalem Star, JD 6,000) and Al Sha'ab Press and Publication Company JD 3,000).

But according to the report the JPA was only able to collect JD 5,000 and JD 2,000 from the first and second companies respectively while it received nothing to date from Al Sha'ab.

The report, however, said that the council will continue its dialogue with the owners of the newspapers to pay their dues to the association.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Mohammad visits PSD

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, Thursday called at the Public Security Department (PSD) and met with PSD Director Lieutenant General Abdul Hadi Al Majali. Prince Mohammad was briefed on the progress of work at the public security units and on new systems to modernise and update field work procedures. Prince Mohammad then visited Muhajirin police station in downtown Amman and was accompanied on the visit by Lt.-Gen. Abdul Hadi Majali.

Five die as bus overturns

AMMAN (J.T.) — Five people were killed and 30 others were injured when a bus overturned at Al Jizeh, some 50 kilometres south of Amman. The bus, with an Egyptian number plate, came from Egypt and was heading for Baghdad when bad weather and overspeeding caused it to overturn on the desert road. The dead and injured people were rushed by public security and civil defence vehicles to Al Bashir Hospital.

Jordan, Syria discuss economic ties

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian-Syrian economic committee has opened meetings in Amman to discuss further facilities for the exchange of goods and means of bolstering economic and trade ties between the two countries. The meetings, expected to last several days, are co-chaired by Under Secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Trade Mohammad Al Saqqaf and his Syrian counterpart Ahmad Al Dabbas. According to a committee spokesman, the two sides are discussing effective solutions for problems of bank transfers for settling payments of the cost of goods imported by either side and the establishment of trade centres for each country in the capital of the other.

No plans to cut oil prices, official says

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government does not intend to reduce prices of oil products in the local market at present, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Ibrahim Badran has said in a statement to the daily call-in programme on Radio Jordan. Dr. Badran added that the government's policy in this respect is based on avoiding local price fluctuations. Dr. Badran added that it is not worth making a "hasty decision" and that it is better to wait until the situation in the market settles down.

Deputies leave for Arab-African dialogue

AMMAN (Petra) — Lower House members Wafsi Mirza and Ismail Hijazi Thursday left for Rabat to take part in the three-day meetings of the Arab-African dialogue conference, due to be held there on Saturday. The conference will discuss means of consolidating Arab parliamentary relations and coordinating Afro-Arab activities in international parliamentary meetings and exchanging legislative expertise. The conference will also discuss a number of issues of interest to Arab and African parliamentarians in the political and economical fields including the Palestine question and means of settling foreign debts.

Joint team to set up meat, fodder projects

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian-Egyptian committee has decided to set up two joint projects for the production of meat and fodder. A statement issued at the end of the committee's meeting in Amman said that a project for producing lean meat will be established in Egypt and one for the production of fodder will be established in the south eastern parts of Jordan. Each project is expected to cost \$12 million, the statement added.

Hawamdeh chairs public works meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — A meeting to review general plans for departments of public works in the Kingdom was held Thursday evening under the chairmanship of Minister of Public Works Mahmoud Al Hawamdeh. The heads of public works departments attending the meeting discussed obstacles impeding the implementation of certain ongoing projects and the requirements for the implementation of the projects.

Turkish products on display in Irbid

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under the patronage of Irbid Mayor Abdul Razzaq Tbeishat, the Turkish products exhibition was inaugurated Friday at the Arab Club hall in Irbid.

Deputising for Dr. Tbeishat, Dr. Omar Qasrawi inaugurated the exhibition. The viewers were impressed to see the high quality of products on display. Many items were sold at competitive prices as Turkish products command high quality and is in conformity with international standards.

It is worth mentioning that Dr. Tbeishat appreciated the quality of items on display, which include various Turkish products, such as costumes, women's and men's wear, silver ware, crystal glass ware, various wooden articles, handmade wool and silk carpet and high quality leather clothes. Dr. Tbeishat noticed the improvements Turkish products have achieved during the period from the time when Dr. Tbeishat was a



student at Turkish universities until now.

The selection of Irbid for holding the exhibition aims to give the inhabitants of Irbid, including the Turkish community there, the opportunity to watch for themselves the Turkish products. It is well-known that some 300 doctors or engineers, who graduated from Turkish universities, in addition to 38 Turkish doctors teaching at the

Yarmouk University live in Irbid. The management of the Turkish products exhibition in cooperation with the Arab Club administration has issued lottery tickets for the benefit of the club. Value of the lottery prizes is approximately JD 2,500 covered by the exhibition management, in addition to two air tickets to Turkey, presented by the Turkish Airways.

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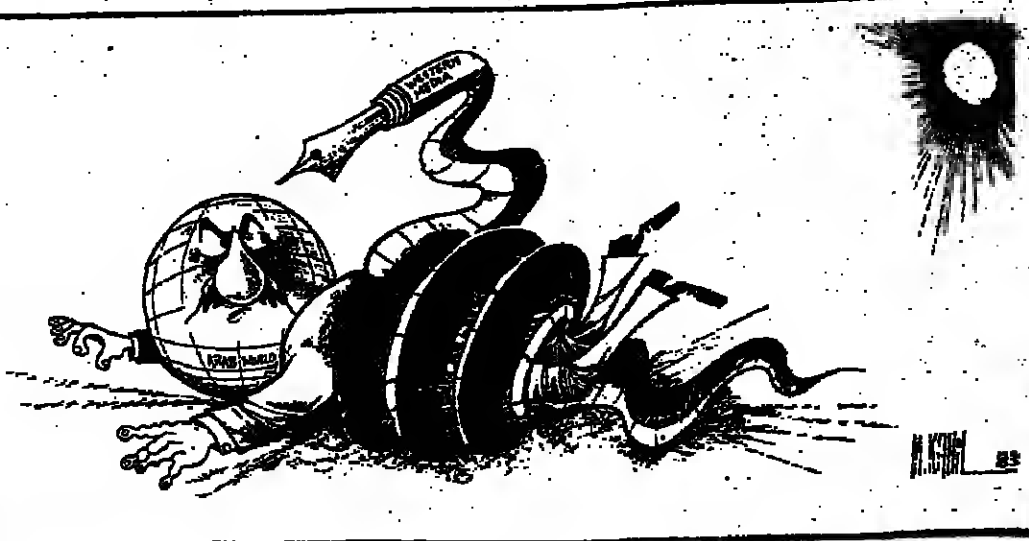
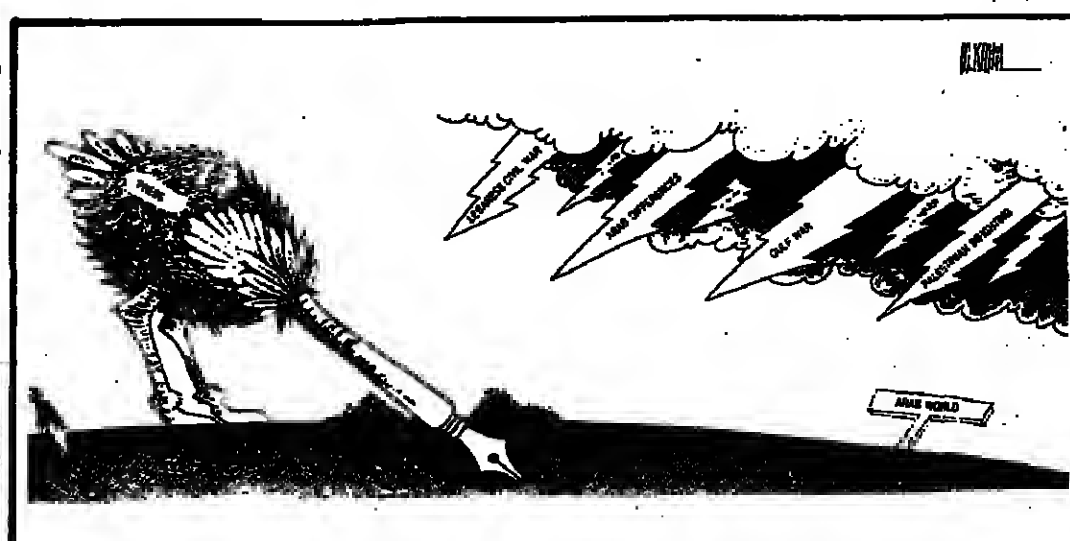
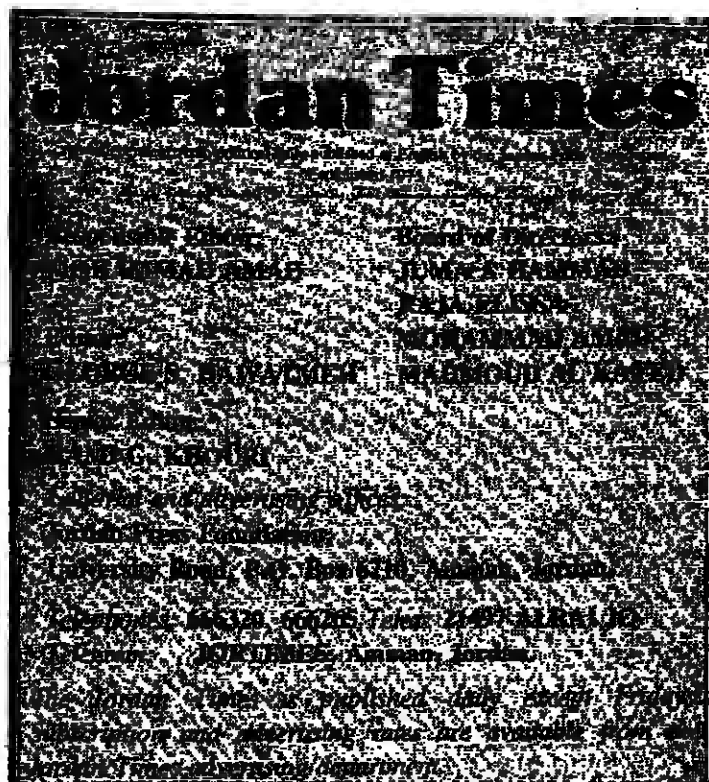


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New information order, national interests versus peoples' liberty

By William Cordes

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Friday's

Al Ra'i: Unifying joint action

KING Hussein's visit to Egypt was part of the on-going consultations between the leadership in both countries aimed at bolstering joint Arab stand in the face of the common challenges. It is natural for the two leaders to meet from time to time to discuss developments in the Arab arena and international issues that can have an impact on the Palestine question and regional events and developments like the Gulf war. Jordan believes that consultations and coordination with Egypt are important elements in joint Arab action because the Arabs continue to face challenges and threats that require a high degree of awareness and vigilance. The only option before the Arabs in the face of this situation is further coordination and further strengthening of ranks specially as the common enemy is now in a race against time in an attempt to dominate the Arab region. The King's visit to Egypt was no doubt another step towards unifying joint action and repelling looming dangers.

Al Dustour: Rallying Arab ranks

KING Hussein's talks with President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo can be considered as part of the unified action and the joint endeavours Jordan and Egypt are undertaking to consolidate Arab ranks and bolster Arab solidarity in the face of dangers and threats to the nation. Since the restoration of Jordanian-Egyptian relations, the two countries have been devoting their time and their effort not only for bolstering bilateral ties in economic, trade and political fields, but also concentrating their efforts towards helping the Arab Nation as a whole. No doubt, the two leaders discussed bilateral affairs but most importantly they must have discussed the on-going Gulf war and the continued Iranian aggression on the Arab Nation. The two leaders devoted their time to Palestine and the Israeli measures to build settlements and perpetuate their occupation of our land. Egypt has to be consulted on all these issues and on ways to find an end to the internal disputes among Arab countries and a just solution to the Palestine problem.

Sawt Al Shaab: Al Karamah Battle

THE anniversary of Al Karamah Battle which took place on March 21 1968 and in which the Jordanian armed forces waged a fierce battle in defence of the homeland, constitutes a turning point in the Arab Nation's struggle towards liberating the usurped lands. The Karamah Battle was militarily and politically an embodiment of the Arab national rising in the face of the aggressiveness of the Israeli enemy and a manifestation of all forms of steadfastness in the confrontation with the Zionists. It was a battle in which the Jordanians defended their freedom and their land with sacrifice and with obstinate resoluteness; and opened a honourable chapter in the country's history. As we observe the anniversary, we remember that other Arab brothers are now involved in a yet another battle to defend the Arab Nation's dignity and honour at the eastern flank of the Arab World.

Thursday's

Al Ra'i: Israeli threats

ISRAEL'S Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin has just issued a threat to Arab countries in general, and Syria in particular because that country has been endeavouring, as he said, to achieve strategic parity with the Israeli enemy. Needless to say, that all Arabs are endeavouring to achieve a military balance with Israel with the purpose of preventing the enemy from committing further aggression and forcing the Israelis to accept United Nations resolutions on the Middle East issue. Rabin has openly announced that Israel is opposed to the presence of Syria at any peace talks in addition to rejecting the PLO as a partner. This new stand manifests the fact that Israel wants to achieve partial and not total solutions for the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that it still hopes to perpetuate its occupation of Arab land. This statement also means that Israel still opposes an international conference to solve the Palestine problem.

Al Dustour: Effective measures

THE Saudi and Kuwaiti leaders meeting in Riyadh most recently came at a crucial time when the Gulf states are dealing with the Gulf war and together confronting the Iranian aggression which is liable to expand and to include the whole region. The Riyadh meeting almost coincided with another meeting by the Arab League on Friday, which is also designed to discuss the Gulf war and the continued Iranian aggression on the Arab Nation. It seems certain that the Arabs are now determined to view the situation more seriously and to tackle the Gulf war from a national angle rather than leaving the two neighbouring states locked in a devastating conflict. The Arabs must have realised this fact following the Iranian invasion of the Fao peninsula and Iran's drive to occupy Iraqi land. The Arab countries must have realised that their urgent calls on Iran to stop its aggression achieved no positive result and that the only way is to take an effective measure to stop the bloodshed.

Last week an article appeared in this space under the headline "Third World and the formulation of a new information order," written by Yugoslav Federal Secretary for Information Aleksandar Petkovic. In his essay Mr. Petkovic reported the latest developments in Third World information management that emerged during the eighth session of the non-aligned countries' Inter-Governmental Council for Coordinating Cooperation in the Field of Information, held earlier this year in Dakar, Senegal.

The effort to found a "new information order," along with the corresponding call for a "new international economic order," has been a prominent item on the non-aligned agenda for at least 15 years. It represents a legitimate attempt by the Third World to free itself from the neo-imperialist manacles of continued Western domination in the fields of information, economics and finance. Though all non-aligned nations have achieved nominal political independence, their development is still circumscribed by the political, economic, social, and cultural environment bequeathed to them by their former colonialists. The Non-Aligned Movement itself was created partially in order to change this environment, or to circumvent and replace it with one more responsive to the needs of

the vast majority of the world's population that the Non-Aligned Movement represents.

In this context the paramount values of independence, sovereignty, and integrity promoted by the Non-Aligned Movement are seemingly unassailable. These are reflected and emphasised by Mr. Petkovic: "A top priority of the non-aligned movement in the domain of information is the development and emancipation of national systems of information and communication. This is a vital element of the faster overall development of each country and it is directly connected with the strivings of countries to reinforce their independence, sovereignty and integrity."

The aim of this policy is the "suppression of monopolies in the field of information" and the creation of the capability to "inform one another and the rest of the world, too, about ourselves, instead of letting the powerful media of the most highly developed countries do this in what is usually a one-sided and biased manner." These goals, too, are difficult to argue with. Self-respect and self-understanding, so critical for development at both the individual and national levels, derive from self-analysis and are manifested and reinforced by self-expression on the world stage. And as an American student of the Middle East, I am painfully aware of the

limitations and prejudice afflicting Western media coverage of the Arab World, and do not doubt that other Third World nations and peoples suffer similar depredations at the hands of outside interpreters.

As unobjectionable and understandable as the non-aligned effort in this realm may seem, it rests on certain assumptions which militate against true progress either vis-a-vis the media of the West or in the quest for meaningful national development. These assumptions arise from the central tenets of the Non-Aligned Movement, i.e. mutual respect and cooperation on the basis of non-interference in the internal affairs of nations.

While these principles may form a sound basis for relations among nations and contribute to a reduction in international conflict, it is neither necessary nor wise to push them into service as a means to legitimise "national sources of information." In light of the fact that the meeting described by Mr. Petkovic was attended by the information ministers of the participating nations, and the corresponding emphasis on "national" systems and sources of information and communication, it is appropriate to address the implications of media development along the lines envisioned by proponents of a "new information order."

First consider what Mr. Petkovic does not mention. In his 2,000 or so words on the subject,

the notions of "free speech," "freedom of the press" or "free flow of information" do not appear. Not that the ideas of freedom and increasing information flow do not figure prominently in his discourse, but that they do so entirely within the national and not the individual context. It seems clear that the "national and regional centres" which figure so prominently in the new information order will be created and controlled by their respective national governments, and furthermore that the various freedoms and principles outlined by Mr. Petkovic apply specifically to governments, and not to the people who live under them.

Also avoided by Mr. Petkovic is the issue of access to information in the Third World. Much, though certainly not all, of the bias displayed by the Western media results from severe limitations on gaining access to the facts of any given situation or event. In the absence of supported assertions of fact, cultural bias and speculation are able to assume a prominent role in the reporting of the Western media.

Furthermore, while the aim of seeking to emancipate national systems of information may be assumed to be the achievement of more balanced, fair and accurate media coverage of the Third World, this is nowhere explicit in Mr. Petkovic's essay. Can the truth-seeking intent of the new information order be taken for granted, or is this a thinly-veiled

attempt to subordinate the media to government purposes without asking too many questions about what those purposes are?

Second, the emphasis on and support for national systems will tend to ensure that the "suppression of monopolies" (i.e. the Western media monopoly) are simply replaced by government monopolies in the information gathering and distribution process. Though it may be eminently reasonable to support the sovereignty of nation-states and governments on the basis of non-interference in internal affairs, it is both unreasonable and nonsensical to rely on those same governments for accurate, critically obtained evaluations of internal activities. For example, to encourage information systems in the Third World "to support and monitor the development programmes and priorities of these countries on the principles of freedom, independence, sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries" is not likely, in practice, to result in either project success or the kind of international confidence necessary for continued development aid from the international community. National and governmental self-interest will naturally obviate critical reporting.

Finally the maintenance of relations with other states, on the basis of mutual respect and cooperation is not necessarily enhanced by self-serving governmental domination of national

media. Because information generated under such conditions will often be unreliable, it will be subject to the same distortion and speculation which now afflicts much of the Western media in its Third World coverage. Open to governmental manipulation, the new information order could create suspicion and mistrust profoundly harmful to the cause of international understanding and cooperation.

The Non-Aligned Movement often comes under attack for refusing to distinguish between good and bad governments. Its willingness to reserve judgment on such sensitive and relative issues, however, is also the main source of its strength as an international organisation. Nevertheless, there are both good and bad governments in the world, and all governments share certain undesirable characteristics by their very nature. They are, after all, instruments for controlling lives of people. Since this control may be exploited for purposes both good and bad, it is perhaps unwise to support policies which increase government control unnecessarily. The new information order, as currently envisioned, would do precisely that, and possibly at the expense of development, future cooperation among nations, and that fleeting but invaluable commodity, the truth.

The writer is a member of the Jordan Times editorial staff.

Prime minister's job could be Chirac's toughest test

By Chris Peterson
Rouen

PARIS — Jacques Chirac, the Gaullist leader designated by Socialist President Francois Mitterrand last Tuesday night to form a new government, faces what could be the toughest task of his career.

The 53-year-old mayor of Paris has a voracious appetite for politics and public life but another term as prime minister could make or break his political career.

Chirac, a graduate of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration — the school for top civil servants — is no stranger to ministerial office.

His entry into politics came as a protégé of the late President Georges Pompidou. He became a household name in the early 1970s as a vigorous minister of agriculture, defending France's interests in European negotiations in Brussels.

He served as prime minister under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing from 1974 until he resigned after a row over his role in 1976.

Chirac's political expertise will be tested to the limit if he decides to take the job and show that a right-wing prime minister can govern under a Socialist president.

Those who know Chirac leave no doubt about his presidential hopes for 1988, when Mitterrand's seven-year mandate expires.

Commentators say his position has not been helped by the failure of the right-wing alliance to win a sweeping majority as it had hoped in the parliamentary elections.

Chirac knows he would run a risk of being affected by fall-out from the constitutional chaos which some commentators forecast as a result of "cohabitation" between a right-wing prime minister and a Socialist president.

He is also aware that his credibility among right-wing voters may suffer if he is seen to cooperate with Mitterrand, who has made it clear he will stay in office.

A Chirac government would have to depend on a handful of independent right-wing deputies, not all of whom like the idea of cohabitation.

However his popularity is affected over the next few months, he can take comfort in the fact that Raymond Barre, his successor under Giscard, was the most unpopular prime minister ever when he left office in 1981.

Barre has recovered to the extent that opinion polls regularly

show voters regard him as the person most likely to be president in 1988.

A tall man who wears smart, blue suits and horn-rimmed spectacles, he has an abrasive style, which supporters say shows he is clear-thinking and courageous and critics call excitable and authoritarian.

But they concur on his boundless energy and appetite for politics.

Close observers of the Chirac phenomenon say that behind the aggressive exterior there is a sensitive, kind man whose interests include Chinese art, French poetry and antiques.

Chirac, who has been building a formidable political machine as mayor of Paris since 1977, is no stranger to controversy.

When he decided to stand for president in 1981 against the incumbent Giscard, he was accused of opportunism and even treachery, and not for the first time.

Chirac was interior minister in the weeks preceding the 1974 presidential election and became convinced that veteran Gaullist Jacques Chaban-Delmas' candidacy was a disaster.

He persuaded enough Gaullists to switch their allegiance, giving Giscard victory over Mitterrand and leaving Chaban-Delmas out in the cold.

By 1976 the Gaullists had become a dwindling and disillusioned party with an ineffective leadership when Chirac took control of it and transformed it into an important political force.

An inveterate smoker of American filter cigarettes, Chirac portrays restless energy and an ability to cut through red tape.

Pompidou once paid tribute to the man he nicknamed "the bulldozer" by saying: "If I wanted a tunnel built overnight between my apartment and my office, Chirac would find a way of doing it."

Chirac, who comes from a wealthy family from the Corrèze region of central France, was once described as a dangerous left-winger in police files after he signed a Communist-backed petition against nuclear weapons during his schooldays in the 1950s. The file was later destroyed.

Still a Lieutenant-Colonel in the French army reserve, he fought in the Algerian war of independence. In 1956 he married Bernadette Chodron de Courcel, daughter of a diplomat. They have two daughters.

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Did the Trojan War really take place?

By Dr. Harald Stenert

THE poetic quality of Homer's epic *Iliad*, the description of the Trojan War, is undisputed — but not so its historical content. For over a century, scholars have been arguing about whether the war over the abduction of the beautiful Helen actually took place. Apparently it did, as new finds seem to prove for the first time.

Admittedly, a quantity of archaeological material has been assembled in the course of the 20th century proving that a fortified city was located at the entrance to the Dardanelles around the time in question, i.e. 1200 B.C., and that it was destroyed at about this time. The economic, social, and political scene during those years also fits Homer's descriptions. Even so, it was not until the autumn of 1984 that a German research team, headed by archaeologist Professor Manfred Korfmann, University of Tübingen, made the first finds suggesting that the great 10-year-long siege was a coalition of minor Greek princes against the mighty fortress of Troy, and that its conquest was reality.

The excavations are still in the early stages, and the evaluation not even that far. And yet the discovery of a large burial ground on the beach at Troy — at the spot where Homer's besieging forces dragged their ships up on to the shore and set up camp — is so surprising and seems to be so directly linked with Homer's account of the hostile operations that the archaeological world has now pinned great expectations to these new discoveries.

All Troy archaeology goes back to Heinrich Schliemann who, in the last century, excavated Hisarlik, the gigantic hill of ruins and

rubble where, according to Homer, Troy was obviously situated — and "recognised" it as Troy. There are no serious doubts about this finding today. Nevertheless, the discovery of Troy does not prove that Homer's Trojan War really happened. Numerous — particularly German — archaeologists have long been of the opinion that Homer merely assembled events from a later period, or individual reports from the Troy era, in his epic, which he transferred to the city of Troy. American researchers are inclined to regard the *Iliad* as a poetically transfigured description of actual events. This dispute is not purely academic, by any means; if the *Iliad* is based on actual events, it would be the oldest European "historical work" with written details (and even names) of life in the Mediterranean Bronze Age.

Manfred Korfmann has long been concerned with the archaeology of the Trojan War. Preliminary investigations of the geographical and transport situation at the entrance to the Dardanelles showed that Troy enjoyed a strategic position in world trade during the Bronze Age — the bulk of which took place between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Like today, the entrance to the Dardanelles was obstructed by a constant outflow from the straits into the Mediterranean. The usual cargo sailing ships of that time were only able to enter the straits during the short periods of prevailing south winds. Until such periods occurred, up to 300 small ships had to drop anchor in lee of the shore; Besik Bay, 8 kilometres from Troy as the crow flies and almost completely silted up nowadays, would have been ideal.

From their lofty hill city, the Trojans would have been well able to constantly survey and, if the need arose, to attack this anchorage area. Hence, they had no difficulty in controlling Black Sea shipping, were able to impose tariffs and staple dues — or even resort to piracy. It is obvious that the then far-trading Greeks were hardly overjoyed at this situation: Troy was undoubtedly a thorn in the flesh for them and their colonies in Asia Minor, and it seems quite feasible that they eventually joined forces to conquer Troy. It may well be that a breach of the law — such as the abduction of the beautiful Helen — by the Trojans provided the Greeks with a good reason for going to war with Troy — to preserve moral standards and legal security.

Although these correlations make the Trojan War more probable, they still do not prove that it happened in the form of a "Grand Coalition of the Greeks" as depicted by Homer. The fact that Troy was destroyed at the time of the Homeric War is also not irrefutable evidence. It occurred about the time of an invasion by the Dorians, coming from the North, which allegedly put an end to the Golden Age of the Greek petty kingdoms. The destruction of Troy could well stem from this invasion.

In 1981, Korfmann decided to seek proof of the Trojan War where the battles must have taken place and besiegers left traces. This was the aforementioned Besik Bay. Several huge burial mounds have long been known to be there. They are allegedly the graves of Achilles and Patroclus, the two Greek heroes. This was to be clarified by a German dig in 1984, which was never finished,

however. Today, we know that these mounds have little or nothing to do with the Trojan War.

In a project financed by the German Archaeological Institute and the German Research Association, scientists renewed their excavations on the beach in Besik Bay in 1982, where Korfmann suspected the Greek ships and camp had been located. After all, this beach was called the "Greek Beach" in ancient times. At last, in late 1984, the dig "hit the nail on the head," to quote Korfmann at a special *Iliad* symposium in the USA recently. A large burial ground, full of urn graves, as was customary at the time of the Trojan War, turned up beneath the sandy beach of the bay, near the Bronze Age coastline; there were cremation places from which the ashes and bones were gathered into large clay vessels.

The dating of these burial finds goes back exactly to the time when the great Homeric destruction of Troy happened. The periphery of the graveyard is situated a bare 15 metres from the shore's edge; there are even stepping stones down to the water, i.e. a sign that relatives felt themselves linked with the sea rather than land-power Troy. It needs little imagination to picture this as the burial ground of the Greek invaders — whose ships and tents were located on the shore. Where else could the invaders from across the sea have buried their countless fallen?

At first glance, the fact that the only well-preserved burial urn contained the remains of two children does not seem to fit this interpretation. And yet, according to Homer, many women were present during the long years of siege, mostly "war booty" who "shared the men's camp." Children were inevitable. Even so, there is still a long way to go from the interpretation of this amazing find to final, scientific proof. But archaeology now seems well on the way to finally being able to say whether the Trojan War actually took place or not — The German Research Service.

Sweet smell of success for Deneuve?

By Robert Basler

NEW YORK — As Catherine Deneuve tells it, she donned a lab coat and guided creation of her new perfume, and then had final say over its ultimate character.

She chose the crystal bottle for the perfume — called Deneuve — and picked its midnight blue box, which she stamped with her "personal signature." Her face adorns the glossy magazine ads.

Deneuve, actress, model and now fragrance designer, is seated in a Manhattan hotel suite, casually dressed in a cream sweater, tartan plaid skirt and black stockings. She is 42, and it is still easy to see why she has often been called the most beautiful woman in the world.

Deneuve's 165-dollar-ounce fragrance is not sold in shops, not advertised on television and by all accounts will soar or crash based almost entirely on her image and ability.

"If you don't like the perfume, it's my responsibility, that's for sure," Deneuve told Reuters in a voice that said she was determined to succeed.

After explaining the importance of image in selling one more fragrance to an already scent-soaked U.S. market, Deneuve described the way women in America see her in a matter-of-fact way.

"They see me as a classic Frenchwoman. Blonde. Sophisticated — not as much as they think — but very French, very feminine," said Deneuve, whose films have included Luis Buñuel's "Belle de Jour," Francois Truffaut's "Mississippi Mermaid" and "The Last Metro" and Jacques Demy's "Umbrellas of Cherbourg."

It was that same image, radiating from a younger Deneuve, that for years successfully sold Chanel and less successfully some other lines, one of which parted with her because research showed her beauty intimidated customers.

About a year ago she was showing interest in representing still another line of perfume when she was approached about helping design a fragrance for a new firm, Parfums Phenix. The firm is a subsidiary of Avon, which markets its cosmetics and toiletries through sales representatives around the



Catherine Deneuve

world. "They wanted to have an image and they did the right thing — they got in touch with me before the fragrance was made," she said.

Deneuve said some of the basics for a new scent had already been done but she made most of the decisions.

She found that success in this business does not come easily. She began her chore soon after she stopped smoking, giving her off-actory senses a fresh charge, but found that still, "after a little while, it's very difficult to smell anything."

She added: "It is difficult to know if a perfume is new, it's so psychological — what you smell is not what I smell. You get into a very emotional field."

The result is something she describes as "semi-oriental and quite floral at the same time."

While Deneuve is already appearing in magazine adverts for the scent, no TV adverts are planned — a bold gamble in a business where several major new scents were unveiled last year alone, one of them with a \$17 million budget that relied heavily on television.

In another unusual tactic, "Deneuve" is being sold not in shops, but by telephone and mail, although Phenix officials say shop sales are a possibility in the future.

Recently, Deneuve was chosen as a new model for the French national heroine "Marianne," replacing Brigitte Bardot, and a poll found that the French overwhelmingly see her as the most beautiful woman in France.

"Ten years ago I don't think a 40-year-old woman had the image she has today — today a woman 40 years old is at the peak of her life as a woman," she said.

Japan urged to increase aid to Third World

By Rich Miller

Reuters

TOKYO — Japan is being urged to use its windfall gains from collapsing raw material prices to fund a new "Marshall Plan" for the needy Third World.

Top businessmen and economists say that such a scheme — modelled on the U.S. plan to rebuild Europe after World War Two — will help ease the global debt crisis and deflect overseas criticism of Japan's mounting economic strength.

"Japan should make a substantial increase in its development assistance," said former Foreign Minister Satoru Okita, now an advisor to Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone.

Japan, which was lifted from the ruins of war itself by U.S. aid 40

years ago, already plans to double its aid commitment by 1992. It will spend \$40 billion in the next seven years and government officials said it would be difficult to spend more.

But Japanese businessmen and economists say more is needed because the collapse in raw material prices will boost Japan's economy and fill its coffers at the expense of those Third World nations which depend on the money from commodity exports.

Economists said Japan's electric power, oil and gas companies will make hundreds of millions of dollars in extra profits due to the collapse in oil prices and the stronger yen.

The strength of the yen, which has risen about 30 per cent against the dollar in the last five months, will slash Japan's import bill for oil

and other key materials priced in dollars on international markets.

Nissan Motor Co Ltd. Chairman Takashi Ishihara said part of these windfall profits should be used to help developing nations. "These gains should be used for solving external friction," said Ishihara, who also heads Keizai Doyukai, a top Japanese business organisation.

The chief of the giant Nomura Securities Company, Setsuya Tabuchi, also called for an increase in Japan's official development assistance (ODA) for the Third World.

Okita said Japan should aim to boost development aid to at least one per cent of its gross national product (GNP), which is the sum total of goods and services produced. At present, Japan spends only 0.35 per cent of GNP on such

assistance.

"The world financial situation is very precarious," said Daiwa Securities Ltd chief economist Akio Kohno. "Japan and other major countries must act to help the debt-ridden developing nations."

Several bankers said a prime candidate for more help was oil producer Mexico, which has been battered by the price collapse.

Okita said his call for increased aid to the Third World was greeted favourably by some parts of the government, but that the finance ministry, which controls the purse strings, was less enthusiastic.

"Industrialised countries have to give much more economic aid and cooperation to developing countries," said the Finance Ministry's director of overseas public investment, Mike Miura.

Arafat blames U.S. for 'dead end'

(Continued from page 1)

undersecretary-general for political affairs, who is on a Middle East tour, a PLO source said, and was also expected to hold talks with President Hosni Mubarak.

On Thursday, Mr. Arafat was reported as saying the PLO was ready to open a new page in its strained relations with Syria.

On his arrival here Wednesday night, Mr. Arafat said in a statement to Al Itihad newspaper: "We have shown our point of view, and they (the Syrians) have shown theirs... we have decided from our side to open a new page and the rest is left to our brothers in the Syrian leadership."

He said the PLO had stopped

media campaigns against the Syrians and hoped meetings with them would bear fruit.

Syria has backed Palestinian criticism of Mr. Arafat.

In another development, Israeli officials said Thursday that Israel has resumed efforts to persuade Palestinian "moderates" to take over the running of main West Bank towns, three weeks after the assassination of the newly appointed mayor of Nablus.

Zafer Al Masri was shot dead outside the Nablus municipality on March 2.

The Israeli officials told Reuters the process of appointing Palestinians to head West Bank municipalities was previously frozen.

Underground group claims blast

(Continued from page 1)

Mansouri, who have been held without justification for more than a year.

"Our patience is running thin and our confidence in Italian justice is beginning to shake. This will make the streets and population of Rome the target of what Paris is now witnessing," the statement said.

Abdo was arrested near Rome's Fiumicino airport in late 1984 after a tip-off from French police.

She is suspected of taking part in a gun attack on the United Arab Emirates pro-consul in Rome in October 1984, in which her male companion was killed.

Terrorism, hostages top Chirac's priorities

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Chirac's ascendancy to the premiership means that for the first time in the 28-year history of the Fifth Republic power will be shared between the right and the left. The left came to power in 1981, ending a 23-year string of conservative governments.

Commentators, stressing the fragility of the new union, say caution and compromise are the keys. But in his address to the nation, Mr. Chirac said he intended to begin implementing immediately a platform stressing the conservative virtues of deregulation, denationalisation, lower taxes, reduced public spending, more competition and greater security, but whose main emphasis is bringing down a 10.4 unemployment rate.

"The French people have made their choice. They have elected a new majority to the National Assembly and, in so doing, they have approved a new political course for the country," he said. "France must be governed. It must be governed with clear-sightedness and efficiency."

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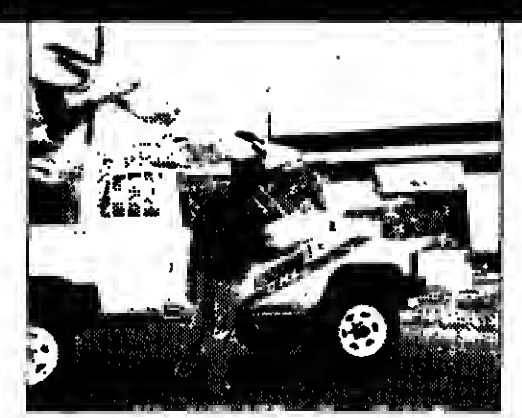
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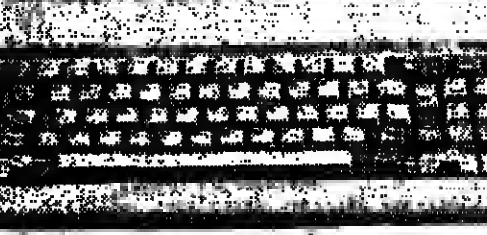
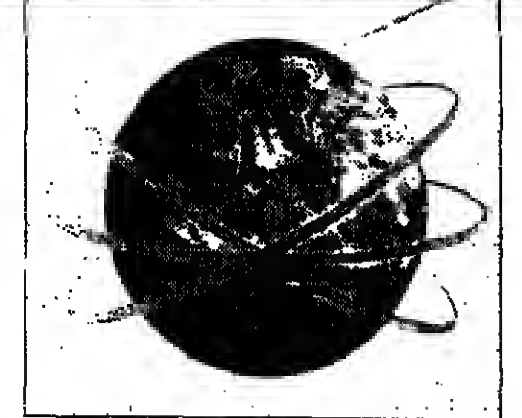
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Egypt crowned new Champions of Africa

CAIRO (R) — Egypt won the African nations' cup when they deposed holders Cameroun 5-4 on penalties here Friday after a 0-0 tie at the end of extra time.

It was something of an anticlimax that Africa's most prestigious soccer trophy should be settled by a penalty shootout. Egypt should have clinched the title in regular play.

They dictated the game for most of the 120 minutes they played but squandered a succession of close chances either through bad finishing or spectacular saves by Cameroun's star goalkeeper Thomas Nkono.

With the two sides tied 4-4 after five penalty shots each, Egypt's Asraf Qassim made it 5-4 to end the agony of the 120,000 crowd led by President Hosni Mubarak.

Cameroun's Andre Kana Biyik was next in turn, but the 20-year-old midfielder shot wide near

the right post.

Earlier in the shootout they were tied 2-2 before Egypt's captain Mustapha Abdou missed. His blunder was immediately compensated for when Thabet Al Battal saved Isaan Sinkot's shot to deny the West Africans a lead.

Biyik now risks becoming the most wanted man in Cameroun, where he turned into a hero overnight last week when he scored twice to help his side send World Cup finalists Algeria crashing out of the tournament.

Star striker Abu Zeid ushered in the Egyptian onslaught with a blazing 30-yard drive within five minutes. So strong was Zeid's shot that that ball dropped from Nkono's hands and ran wide close

to his goal-line.

Veteran striker Mahmoud Al Khateib missed again 15 minutes later with a back-flick shot. There were no other close chances for either side before the break. The Egyptians looked even more dangerous in the second half despite the confidence their rivals were showing in attack.

Cameroun's Emile Mbouh, a relentless midfielder, looked close to scoring an own goal in the 66th minute when he sent Nkono diving to save his header.

Egypt's Magdi Abdul Ghani hit the woodwork in the 70th minute with a ferocious shot unleashed from 35-metres.

Zeid, trying to emulate the goal which eliminated Morocco in the semi-final on Monday, drove a free kick 10 minutes later which Nkono barely managed to send over the crossbar.

Cameroun, coached by Frenchman Claude Le Roy, showed more stamina than the hosts in extra time.

Egypt, however, appeared closer to settling the issue in extra time had it not been for Khateib's careless finishing.

The 32-year-old striker, who finished the championship without a single goal to his credit, failed to find his target with only Nkono to beat in the 104th and 112th minutes.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Iraq sends 'B' team to Gulf tourney

BAHRAIN (R) — World Cup finalists Iraq are hoping their second-string team will be able to retain the seven-nation Gulf Soccer Championship starting Saturday. They are likely to face a strong challenge from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the two-week tournament, which also includes Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman, host for the last tournament two years ago.

Hughes transfer to Barcelona confirmed

LONDON (R) — Manchester United striker Mark Hughes has signed a contract to play for Barcelona next season, it was confirmed Friday. The Welsh international will join the Spanish champions and European Cup semifinalists in a \$3 million deal, subject to a satisfactory medical examination. Manchester United and Hughes, 22, issued a joint statement Friday, ending weeks of speculation about the transfer. The statement said: "Mark Hughes has signed a contract with Barcelona football club to play for them next season conditional only on a medical."

Top official cleared in Hong Kong scandal

HONG KONG (R) — A top horse racing official sacked last month after his arrest in Hong Kong's worst track scandal said Friday he had been cleared in a probe by anti-graft agents. Australian Brian Sullivan, former senior supervisory steward of the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club, told Reuters: "I have been totally cleared." Sullivan was questioned by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), which is probing possible racing abuses in the British colony.

England to blacklist soccer hooligans

LONDON (R) — A blacklist of convicted British soccer hooligans has been drawn up in a bid to stop them travelling to matches at the World Cup finals in Mexico. The list was revealed at a press conference in London Friday when Sports Minister Richard Tracey stressed the importance of avoiding trouble at the finals starting in Mexico on May 31. He said: "Our national prestige has been damaged enough by the antics of so-called football supporters abroad."

Graf ready to inherit top spot

By Jack Cavanagh
Reuter

NEW YORK — Steffi Graf of West Germany Thursday night gave a clear-cut demonstration in a pressure-packed situation as to why she is regarded as the future queen of women's tennis.

In a wondrous performance in the quarter-finals of the \$500,000 Women's Tennis Championship at Madison Square Garden, the 16-year-old Graf edged Pam Shriver 4-6 7-6 (7-5) 6-3 to gain the semifinals of the 16-player tournament.

In a brilliantly-played match that was far and away the best of the tournament to date, Graf battled back from within two points of defeat in the second-set tie-breaker to win it 7-5 when from 2-5 she ran off five points in a row.

The blonde teenager, who has soared to third in the world rankings, did it with the flourish that characterised her play throughout the one-hour and 51-minute match as she won three of the five points of dazzling groundstroke winners.

Graf, who lost her service only once in the match, then achieved the only break of the third set in the eighth game to win the final set.

The pattern of the match was the same throughout, with the 183-centimetre tall Shriver attacking the net constantly and Graf, staying back throughout, trying to pass her with her accurate and sharply-hit groundstrokes. Both were successful. Shriver, utilising her long reach and pla-

ying at the top of her game, scored often at the net with volleys. As a result, she forced Graf to make perfect down-the-line placements and crosscourt winners.

Graf was up to the challenge, electrifying the crowd of about 10,000 with sizzling winners, most of which were hit from beyond the baseline.

The eighth game of the final set typified Graf's spectacular play. Leading 4-3 on service, she broke Shriver's powerful serve with four straight winners — a backhand service return, a backhand down the line, a forehand crosscourt winner and another backhand service-return winner.

That made it 5-3, Graf, who reupped the West German, with a poised belying her 16 years, calmly sealed her victory by serving out at 30.

Graf's triumph was her second over Shriver in four matches, with the previous triumph coming in a memorable three-set, triple-tiebreaker match in the quarter-finals of last year's U.S. Open.

Shriver's victories were last year at Wimbledon and at Stuttgart. "She's a better player than when she beat me at the Open," said Shriver, who was seeded sixth in this event, which climaxes the year-long women's circuit.

"Her serve has picked up. And she's very mature and really knows what she's doing out there. And she plays the big points very well. I think I played as well as I can. If she ever starts coming to the net, well..."

Through she has yet to win a major tournament, in the past year Graf has emerged as the most promising young player.

She has a solid all-round game, marked by steady baseline play, a pulverising forehand that may be the strongest in women's tennis, a deadly sliced backhand, an accurate and strong, if not powerful, service, and quick movements.

Since January last year, Graf has been runnerup in five tournaments, reached three semifinals, including last year's U.S. Open, and the fourth round at Wimbledon and the French Open.

Unfortunately, the West German teenager has been overshadowed by compatriot Boris Becker ever since his victory at Wimbledon last year.

In the past year, Graf, who is coached by her father, Peter, has vanquished past a number of the circuit's best players in the world rankings, including Shriver, U.S. Open champion Hana Mandlikova and Helena Sukova of Czechoslovakia, countrywoman Claudia Kohde-Kilsch, Manuela Maleeva of Bulgaria and Americans Kathy Rinaldi and Zina Garrison.

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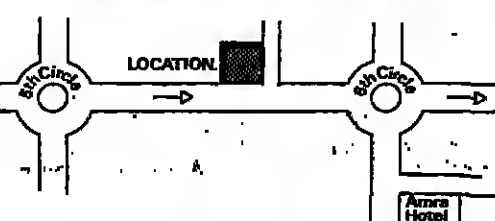
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West Germany expected to post 27-year low rate of inflation

ONN (R) — West Germany's inflation rate is expected to fall to 10 per cent this year, its lowest since 1959, a banking association said Thursday.

Last year West Germany had average inflation of 2.2 per cent, one of the lowest rates in the world, and rises in the cost of living have slowed further since then because of the dramatic slide in oil prices and the dollar since January.

The Association of German cooperative banks said inflation would average just one per cent this year provided there was no significant change in the lower end of oil prices and the dollar. It noted that figures for January and February showed import prices and wholesale prices had fallen compared with the same months of 1985.

"Lower oil prices have been of decisive influence in achieving this rate stability," the association said in a report.

In the first three months of 1986 West German motorists have seen petrol prices fall sharply to under one mark (44 cents) per litre from about 1.40 marks (62 cents) at the end of 1985.

Parliament passes disputed strike law

Meanwhile, a hotly-disputed change to West Germany's strike laws was pushed through parliament Thursday after a stormy debate which catapulted the issue into the battle for votes in next year's general election.

The amendment will limit access to unemployment benefits for workers laid off in a dispute and is designed essentially to stop trade unions tapping public funds to "subsidise" strikes.

It has been fiercely contested by the Trade Union Federation (DGB) and the Social Democrats (SPD), who branded the bill a "declaration of war" on the unions and vowed Thursday to scrap it if they win the January 1987 election.

"You (the government) have the last-but-one word. The voters will have the last word," SPD parliamentary leader, Mr. Hans-Jochen Vogel told the packed chamber.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, in a speech punctuated by boos and jeers from the opposition, accused critics of the centre-right coalition government of misrepresenting the bill's intentions "because what you want is a change of power by any means."

The amendment was passed 265 to 210 on a roll-call vote forced by the SPD in a bid to expose a rift in Mr. Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), but returns showed voting split entirely along party lines.

The new law must now be debated in the upper house next month and is expected to come

into force by May.

The government insists the change was necessary to preserve the neutrality of the state in industrial disputes.

Labour Minister Norbert Blum accused unions Thursday of "blind socialist fanaticism" in their opposition.

Radical Greens Party deputies walked out of the debate when Mr. Blum spoke. They proposed on their return that the vote be put back until the last session of parliament before the election.

The 7.5-million-strong DGB has staged widespread warning strikes against the amendment but held only low-key protests in what appeared to be a deliberate move to avoid charges of interfering in the parliamentary process.

In an initial reaction, the militant engineering union I.G. Metall said it would step up campaigning for the bill's repeal and "burst the chains that are being used to shackle us."

Employers and Liberal Free Democrats (FDP) in Mr. Kohl's coalition pushed for a new law last year after a strike by I.G. Metall which crippled the car industry for seven weeks in 1984.

But the new formula has failed to win unqualified support from employers' organisations and had to be re-drafted several times to meet reservations among CDU deputies from areas with a predominantly working class electorate.

Oman seeks \$500 loan from international banks

BAHRAIN (R) — Oman, its oil dependent economy hard-hit by falling world oil prices, is seeking to raise up to \$500 million from international banks, banking sources said Thursday.

They said the Bahrain-based International Bank (GIB) has been asked to arrange the credit, its third and potentially largest international bank borrowing.

GIB, owned by Oman and other Gulf Arab governments, has arranged the sultanate's previous two major international loans but a spokesman at the bank had no immediate comment on the report.

Omani officials have said foreign loans would be used to help tackle a budget deficit caused by falling oil revenues, which have already led to a 10.2 per cent devaluation of the Omani rial and a campaign to cut government spending.

The sources said the loan would be in the form of a syndicated eight-year credit, with a five-year grace period, at 3/8 per cent point over London Inter Bank Offered Rates (LIBOR), the finest terms the sultanate has yet obtained.

Oman's previous loan of \$300 million, together with a \$100 million Euronote facility, was signed in January last year, and its first major loan for \$300 million was signed in June 1983.

Kuwaiti official regrets low inter-Arab trade

KUWAIT (OPECNA) — Inter-Arab trade over the past 10 years represents only 7.5 per cent of the Arab World's total international business, the president of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Saqr, said here last week.

Addressing an experts' panel on a new Arab export guarantee scheme against commercial and non-commercial risks, he attributed low inter-Arab trade to poor production capacities and lack of political incentives.

The chamber president noted that despite the existence of an Arab common market, mutual trade had not flourished.

Sheikh Al Saqr said non-commercial risk guarantees provided to Arab businessmen by the Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation encouraged them to invest in Arab countries rather than transfer funds elsewhere.

He emphasised that higher domestic investment would strengthen Arab economies, lead to production specialisation and open the way for broader Arab commercial exchanges.

Another speaker, Sheikh Ma'Amoun Ibrahim Hassan, director general of the Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation, told participants that Arab trade was still being conducted through traditional channels, despite rising industrial output in several Arab countries in the last decade.

He pointed out that Arab exports were internationally competitive, consisting as they did of raw materials and semi-finished products.

Sheikh Hassan said the corporation had streamlined its export guarantee system to include commercial and non-commercial risks in a bid to encourage Arab exporters.

He said the new system, devised at Khartoum last July, would be implemented for a two-year trial period.

ITC controls on world tin exports end this month

LONDON (R) — Controls on the amount of tin that producing members of the International Tin Council (ITC) are allowed to export will lapse at the end of March, a council spokesman said Thursday.

The decision effectively ends the ITC's role as a power in the troubled world tin industry.

The ITC, which plunged the tin market into its worst crisis last October when it ran of money to continue mopping up excess supplies, said it no longer supported export curbs.

New CBJ book focuses on Arab monetary integration

AMMAN (J.T.) — A recently concluded study by the department of research and studies at the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) highlights the advantages of adopting a unified Arab currency (the Arab dinar) to meet the challenges of present currency fluctuations, falling oil prices and development needs.

The book, written in Arabic by Ms. Diana Abdullah Dabbas, is entitled Arab Financial Integration and includes six analytical sections.

Of importance to readers are parts that elaborate on the value of financial integration and scientific views in this regard. Also of significance are the experiences of many international blocs and global institutions in running their monetary policies.

The book, introduced by CBJ Governor Hussein Al Qassem as being a valuable in-depth analysis, reviews Arab accomplishments over the years to attain an integrated economic society and points to positive areas that could bolster efforts towards unifying financial transactions.

The book concludes with a projected scheme that can be implemented to achieve Arab monetary unification.

OPEC meeting may end without reaching decision

GENEVA (R) — World oil markets may be waiting in vain for a signal on pricing or output from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) conference here, delegates told Reuters Thursday.

They said that far from nearing agreement on action needed to buoy up prices and restore stability to nervous markets, the ministers had not talked about specific figures at all.

For several days prices, at \$14 a barrel already at their lowest in real terms in a decade, have moved nervously on rumours of possible agreement by OPEC to cut its output, at least partially ending the world glut of crude oil.

But Alberto Parra, a senior Venezuelan delegate who chaired Thursday's meeting of experts held concurrently with the ministerial session, told journalists: "We have not discussed the cutting of production. We just discussed the market parameters."

Another senior delegate who attended the ministerial meeting reported "no sense of desperation or urgency. Nobody realises how serious it is."

The ministers, he added, spent "50 per cent of their time talking about the past and recriminating and complaining about each other, and the other 50 per cent they are making long-winded policy statements."

One source confirmed that there was general agreement that production levels had to come down, but that not every country was ready to take a cut.

OPEC's self-imposed output ceiling is 16 million barrels per day (b/d), but its actual production is more like 17 million. Nigerian Oil Minister Rilwanu Lukman said the group was considering options for reducing this to between 13 and 16 million b/d, against an estimated demand next quarter of up to 15 million.

But conference sources Thursday said these figures were only scenarios, not firm proposals. The only actual figure formally put to the meeting in more than five days of talks was Ecuador's suggestion of a 15 per cent cut in exports by all members, said one delegate. And this had been dismissed by several states.

The only sign of progress, said one source, was that five non-OPEC oil producers — Egypt, Mexico, Malaysia, Oman and Angola — invited here by OPEC, were still present and declaring their readiness to cooperate.

"The ideal solution now is for OPEC to go back to 16 million b/d and for the non-OPEC countries to cut something," the delegate said. Few analysts would argue with Thursday's statement by Kuwaiti Minister Ali Al Khalifa Al Sabah that OPEC still faces "big problems."

Although OPEC members have been floundering the rules for months, one senior delegate said OPEC, defying market realities, might decide simply to reaffirm its official crude oil price of \$28 a barrel and its official output ceiling of 16 million b/d before adjourning the

stalemate conference.

EC to diversify supply

In Brussels, European Community (EC) economics ministers said Thursday the 12 nations would continue to pursue policies to diversify their energy sources despite the recent sharp drop in crude oil prices.

The ministers said in a statement that there was no reason to adopt new specific Community policy measures now to bolster research and development of alternative energy sources.

But they agreed that the EC's long-term policy goals of diversifying energy sources should be maintained, especially since current market weaknesses were likely to be temporary.

"The reduction in the demand for oil in the EC since 1974 reflects the success of energy policy measures taken over the past decade," the ministers said.

"The substantial fall in oil prices over the past few weeks should not have any significant detrimental short-term energy effects," they added.

But the ministers warned that a sustained fall in oil prices could have significant effects on the energy restructuring performance of the EC.

They said all industrial nations should adopt a consistent approach towards energy problems ahead of the ministerial meeting of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris on April 17 and 18 and the Tokyo summit of seven leading Western powers in May.

Meanwhile, a European Commission study, prepared for a meeting of EC energy ministers said wealthy Gulf oil producers are unlikely to withstand for long the pressure from poorer OPEC members to return to oil pricing and production discipline.

The study said OPEC would emerge strengthened if the Gulf countries bowed to such pressure from their poorer partners.

With none of the non-OPEC oil producing countries seeming set to join OPEC or curb production to protect prices, cracks in OPEC's firmness are starting to show, the study said.

"It is difficult to see how the Gulf countries will be able to withstand long the demands by the poorest members of OPEC for a halt to hostilities," it said.

If, however, the Gulf countries wish to continue their contest with non-OPEC producers, prices will continue to fall, with a risk of a break-up of OPEC, it said.

Norway resists pressure

In Oslo, the Norwegian government is showing no signs of giving in to increasing pressure from within and outside the country to cut crude oil output, officials said Thursday.

Central bank chief, Mr. Hermod Skanland, joined opposition calls on the conservative coalition to reduce Norway's one million b/d output. He said Norway should reduce output to the 1985 level of 740,000 b/d.

Mr. Skanland said his appeal was not related to calls by OPEC to cut output. But Norway, he said, was too dependent on oil and gas income and the recent drop in oil prices demonstrated its vulnerability.

Government officials, however, told Reuters that long-term investments in Norwegian oil production had been made and short-term cutbacks were extremely difficult to achieve.

Oil and Energy Minister Kaare Kristiansen has maintained Oslo's official policy of refusing to intervene in the activities of oil companies operating offshore Norway.

Deputy Foreign Minister Thorbjorn Frymoyes told a meeting that OPEC was seeking "scapegoats" to blame for the collapse in prices. Norway, he said, should maintain its "long-term policy of moderation."

A spokesman for Norway's state oil company Statoil told Reuters prices had to fall "way below current levels" before production cuts would be considered.

The energy spokesman for the opposition Labour Party, Ms. Halvard Bakke, rejects the government arguments, saying Norway's production was too small to make any difference in prices. Signals from Norway that it wished to see higher crude prices could have an important effect on the market, he said.

Mr. Ole Gunnar Austrvik, a researcher at Norway's state-funded Foreign Policy Institute, said a positive response to OPEC calls for cuts would have important psychological effects on prices.

Mr. Austrvik said Norwegian pressure on fellow North Sea producer Britain and other Western European nations at least to listen to OPEC could push prices back up without any output curbs being necessary.

Industry sources said Statoil cut its monthly crude price to about \$19.50 a barrel in February, a \$4.5 reduction on the January price.

The sources told Reuters Statoil expects to set a March price of between \$17 and \$18 a barrel but that agreement had not yet been reached.

"They're all sitting on the fence at the moment," one source said, adding customers were waiting for the outcome of the current OPEC meeting in Geneva.

A Statoil spokesman refused to confirm or deny the reported price changes, saying the price was kept secret.

The price Statoil gets for its North Sea crude has collapsed from \$26.50 in December and \$24 in January, the sources added.

Statoil offers oil at up to \$1 a barrel above spot market levels under its monthly pricing scheme, introduced at the end of 1984.

Export challenge forces Cyprus to improve, expand agriculture

NICOSIA (R) — Cyprus, kept flat by the money it earns from sports and tourism, is making a valiant bid to broaden its agricultural exports to meet tougher competition in the lucrative markets of Europe.

The Mediterranean island, granted independence from Britain in 1960, is ploughing its efforts into increasing irrigation, boosting research and experimenting with new crops. Improved marketing for its produce is also high on the agenda.

"Meeting European tastes and prices is a priority with Spain and Portugal joining the European Community," says a Cypriot economist. "They sell similar products to us."

In 1984, agricultural production abroad brought in \$116 million, accounting for a third of the exports from the Greek-Cypriot half of the divided island and 9.5 per cent of its gross domestic product.

About 80 per cent of the agricultural exports mainly potatoes, citrus fruit and grapes — go to Europe, with Britain the biggest buyer.

Cyprus is now negotiating with the enlarged 12-nation European Community for a unique customs union which would abolish all import duties for agriculture and industry within the next 15 years.

Whatever the outcome — and experts expect the arrangements to be favourable for agriculture — Cyprus is gearing to the European market and is planning a major promotion to introduce a Cypriot brand logo to Europeans.

Low rainfall has always been a problem, but a string of dams built around the island now ensures more reliable water supplies for irrigation.

The government, helped by the World Bank, is also constructing an intricate \$200 million system to carry water from the wet mountains west to the dry east.

"The 'southern conveyor,' while designed to provide water for towns and tourist resorts, will be a boon for agriculture. It will irrigate some 10,000 hectares, saving rich potato farmland from underground saline water and bringing extra land under crops."

The ambitious project is backed by a land consolidation scheme bringing together scattered farm holdings to make production more economical.

Experts say Cyprus needs better marketing techniques to identify export opportunities.

"We need to find out what will sell in Europe and whether we can grow it here," says one expert.

The Agricultural Research Institute is experimenting with new crops for export, testing climatic

conditions and soil, and has already made an impact.

Avocados, introduced in the last decade, are now exported to Europe. The institute has high hopes too for mandarins, a new strain of citrus fruit that is a cross between tangerines and oranges.

Mangoes are also being tried. But scientists doubt the fruit will survive the extremes of Cyprus, where long hot summers give way to cold winter spells.

The institute's director, Mr. Constantinos Sergiou, says Cyprus is leading the field in agriculture in the eastern Mediterranean.

Cyprus is also having success breeding and exporting livestock, selling pure-bred sheep and goats at premium prices.

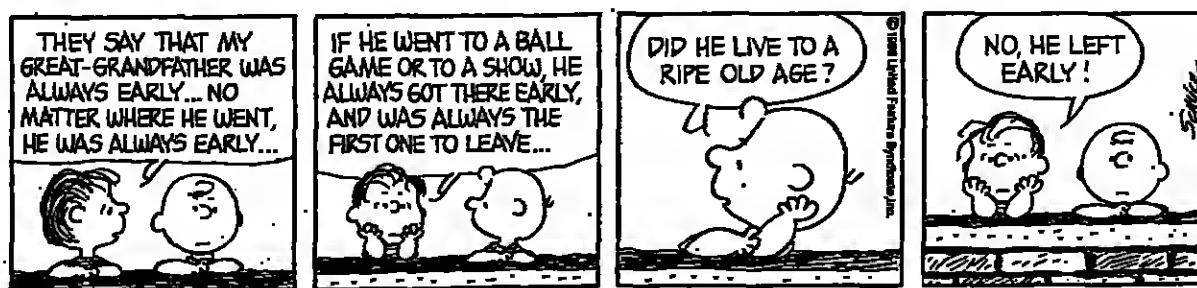
"We are now exporting the Damascus goat to Damascus," exults Mr. Sergiou.

Kuwait to get Iraqi gas in May

LONDON (OPECNA) — Iraqi Oil Minister Qasim Taki Al Oraibi was quoted here as saying that the pipeline carrying Iraqi gas to Kuwait would be operational in May. Mr. Al Oraibi said that the four-year renewable agreement with Kuwait, signed in Baghdad last November, would come into effect the day operations began.

Under the first phase of the project, some 200 million cubic feet a day will be pumped to Kuwait.

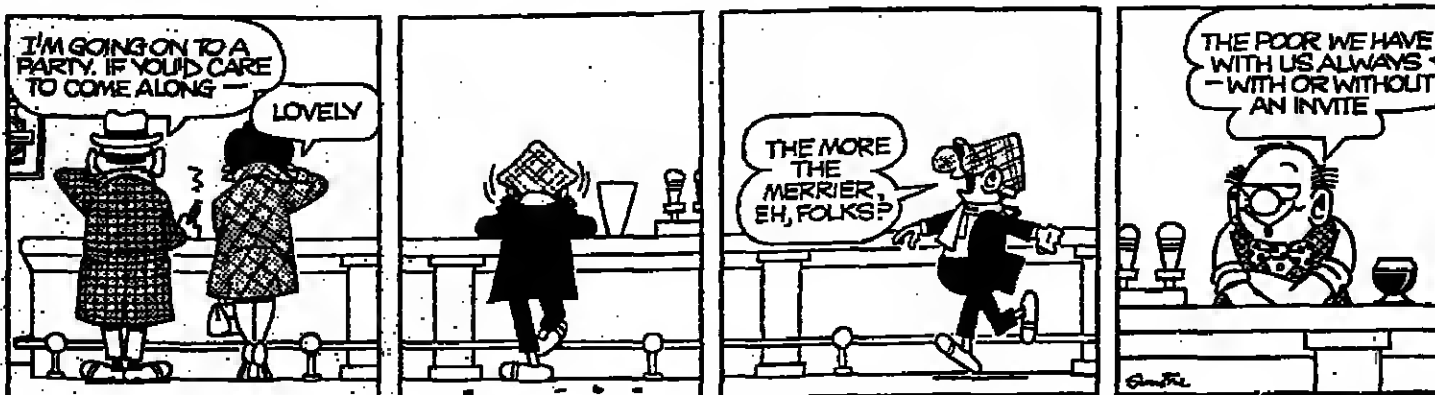
Peanuts



Mutt 'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



THE BETTER HALF. By Harris



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SITOC

ZYUF

DAIMWY

BRAGLE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer. Print answer here: "O O O O O"

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ADMIT BRAIN GUZZLE PRIMER

Answer: The joke told by the tramp turned out to be this — A "BUMMER"

Horoscope and Crosswords not received

Indian police shoot 4 in Sikh assault on Punjab assembly

CHANDIGARH, India (R) — At least four people were killed and 25 injured when police fired at militant Sikhs tried to storm the Punjab state assembly here Friday.

Police said they fired about 30 rounds as Sikhs, some brandishing traditional razor-sharp swords, tried to breach police lines.

Police and crack paramilitary troops had earlier failed to disperse the 6,000-strong crowd with tear gas.

It was the worst violence ever in the Punjab state capital and represented a direct militant challenge to the six-month-old moderate Sikh government of Chief Minister Surjit Singh Barnala.

The assault followed a week of violence which prompted the Barnala government to seek 10,000 central government police reinforcements.

Extra police have been pouring into the Sikh-majority state since

Wednesday to head off extremist killings and further clashes between Sikhs and minority Hindus.

Nearly 200 people have been killed in Punjab since September 1985 when Mr. Barnala took power. Most have died in attacks by extremists seeking an independent Sikh nation, but the violence has spilled over to attacks on Hindus.

In Chandigarh, militants demanding the release of jailed colleagues burst through two of three police cordons around the assembly and charged the gates through clouds of tear gas and past mounted police.

When the rest of the crowd tried to pour through the breach men from the elite Border Security

Force opened fire. "I saw about two dozen people fall down. Later the police came and lifted them into buses," an eyewitness told Reuters.

"They said three died on the spot and another in hospital," he said.

Thousands of supporters of the militant United Akali Dal group slipped into the city Thursday night past police roadblocks for the protest against Mr. Barnala's government which they accuse of betraying the Sikh cause.

They demanded the release of jailed Sikh militants and the reinstatement of Sikh soldiers who deserted after the Indian army stormed the Sikhs' holiest shrine, the Golden Temple at Amritsar, in June 1984 to flush out extremists.

The protest followed violence Thursday night between Hindus and Sikhs in other parts of the state including the Hindu-

majority Batala town where five people died in street battles on Sunday.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) Party lost further ground Friday to opposition groups in parliament when it won only five of 19 seats in elections to the Upper House, the Rajya Sabha.

Five seats in the polls, held every two years, went to the regional Telugu Desam Party which rules southern Andhra Pradesh state and forms the largest opposition group in the Lower House.

The Congress (I) lost seven seats in the Rajya Sabha, slipping to 152 members in the 244-seat House which is elected by India's state assemblies.

Political analysts said the losses could pose a problem for Mr. Gandhi in pushing through constitutional amendments such as planned electoral reforms, which require two-thirds approval of both houses.

Sabah capital quiet after arrests

KOTA KINABALU, Malaysia (R) — Sabah's troubled capital was calm Friday after police arrested more than 1,600 militant Muslims who had holed up in the state mosque after a week of bloody sectarian strife.

Police reported a bomb blast in Sandakan on the east coast but said it did no damage and no one was hurt. There have now been 30 explosions in the east Malaysian state since March 12.

Five people have been killed and at least 20 injured in riots, fires and bombings during violent demonstrations by militant Muslims opposed to the mainly Christian government.

A former Muslim incumbent is challenging the rule of Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan in the courts and a ruling is due on April 15.

Mr. Pairin dissolved the state assembly on Feb. 26 to call for fresh elections within 90 days after several assemblymen defected to the opposition. A polling date has yet to be set.

Kota Kinabalu Police Chief Mohammad Isahak Awadon told reporters that 2,232 people had been arrested throughout Sabah, including 1,656 at the mosque where Friday prayers went ahead after they gave themselves up and were arrested.

Federal opposition leader Lim Kit Siang said the rioters' leaders should be arrested for "tinkering with the safety of Sabah's people by holding demonstrations."

Talking to reporters on a one-day visit to the state, he said normalcy should be restored without the federal government declaring a state of emergency.

Mr. Pairin, a Christian, and federal Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad, a Muslim, have separately rejected demands by Sabah's opposition for federal intervention.

China urges destruction of nuclear weapons

PEKING (R) — Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang called Friday for destruction of nuclear and chemical weapons and an end to the arms race in space, saying the danger of war still hung over the world.

In a major speech to a mass rally to mark International Peace Year, Mr. Zhao urged the United States and the Soviet Union to take the lead in dismantling their nuclear arsenals.

"The turbulent international situation indicates that the danger of war is yet to be removed," he said.

Mr. Zhao called on the two superpowers for "simultaneous and balanced reduction and on-the-spot destruction of medium-range nuclear missiles deployed in Europe and Asia."

This would create favourable conditions for an international conference to discuss further nuclear disarmament and "through destruction of nuclear weapons, he added.

He said China had not conducted nuclear tests in the atmosphere for many years and would not carry out such tests in future.

Mr. Zhao said international agreements on the complete prohibition of space weapons and destruction of chemical weapons should be concluded as soon as possible.

He said China needed a peaceful environment for several generations to approach or catch up with developed countries economically.

In what diplomats described as a clear reference to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and Moscow's support for Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea, Mr. Zhao said world peace could only be maintained if nations refrained from interfering in the internal affairs of other countries.

The speech, made to an audience of nearly 10,000 in the Great Hall of the People, came at the same time Soviet First Deputy Prime Minister Ivan Arkhipov left China after a week-long visit.

Diplomats said the unveiling during Mr. Arkhipov's visit of a peace plan for Kampuchea by Prince Norodom Sihanouk's anti-Vietnamese guerrilla coalition seemed like a deliberate slap in the face for Moscow. The coalition's main backer is Peking.

Vietnam and the government it supports in Phnom Penh have rejected the plan.

Sino-Soviet talks successful

China and the Soviet Union said Friday they had held successful talks on cooperation in trade and technology, but neither indicated that any new decisions had been taken.

Mr. Arkhipov told reporters he had achieved very positive results during a six-day visit to China.

Chinese Vice-Premier Li Peng said positive achievements had been made in trade, economy, science and technology.

These are the fields covered by a Sino-Soviet commission which was set up last year and met for the first time during Mr. Arkhipov's visit.

Speaking at Peking's old airport before flying home, Mr. Arkhipov said it was difficult for him to add anything about the visit to what had already appeared in the press, although he said further information might appear Saturday.

Soviet officials would not disclose any details about the terms of a protocol to last year's trade agreement which the two sides were due to have signed Friday.

Neither would they forecast whether it should mean a further increase in bilateral trade, which they previously estimated would top \$2 billion this year.

Asked when the Soviet and Chinese foreign ministers would make a long-awaited exchange of visits, Mr. Arkhipov said the visits would have to take place.

But he said he had not discussed the matter with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and so could say nothing about it.

Experts begin inquest into aborted Ariane launch

KOUROU, French Guiana (R) — An urgent inquest began into the dramatic aborted launch of an Ariane rocket carrying two satellites, and Ariane officials said they hoped to schedule a re-launch in eight to 10 days.

The last-minute abortion of the launch, which was triggered by a failure of flight computers to register a crucial piece of data seconds before lift-off, came as a psychological blow to Ariane.

The flight was to be the first from a new second launchpad at the Kourou Space Centre. The pad was completed last summer with the aim of doubling Ariane's launch capacity to around 10 flights a year.

Ariane President Frederic d'Allest told reporters it was too early to blame the problem on the launchpad.

But he added that the malfunction was "clearly a ground equipment problem," which technicians hoped to identify within a few hours.

While the aborted lift-off may only lead to a delay of a few days in the launch, industry officials here feared that it could further undermine long-term confidence in the reliability of satellite launch systems.

Despite Ariane's success in putting two European scientific satellites into orbit last month, the

memory of January's U.S. space shuttle disaster is still fresh.

And Ariane itself had to blow up a rocket in flight last September with the loss of two satellites after it veered off course five minutes after the launch.

A successful re-launch would go a long way to allaying these fears, but Mr. d'Allest warned that the rocket would have to be examined very closely before a flight could be authorized.

He said that all three stages of the rocket would have to be drained of fuel.

The third stage liquid oxygen and hydrogen tanks would have to be checked for damage they may have sustained in the seconds after the aborted lift-off, when technicians had to depressurise them rapidly.

Space officials here were pleased and relieved with the perfect functioning of the automatic control safety mechanism which triggered the launch abortion.

But they were also aware that the final seconds of countdown could have led to a potentially catastrophic explosion, had the first stage main engines ignited while the rocket was still attached to its umbilical tower.

"There wouldn't have been much launchpad left," one commented wryly.

Chile holds 120 protesters

SANTIAGO (R) — Anti-government demonstrators threw up isolated barricades of rocks and burning tyres on the outskirts of Santiago at the end of an opposition "day for democracy" in which at least 120 people were arrested.

Residents reported hearing explosions and occasional shooting and said some main roads were blocked. But barricades were few and far between and police and troops avoided clashes by staying out of the city's trouble-spots.

Disturbances in the centre of Santiago continued late into Thursday night — more than nine hours after riot police broke up a symbolic poll to choose between dictatorship and democracy.

Cartons turned into mock ballot boxes were soaked by police water cannon and thousands of ballot papers were scattered through the city centre as demonstrators fled a barrage of tear gas grenades.

Police sources said at least 120 people were arrested, among them a dozen opposition leaders of trade unions, professional associations and political parties, but most were later released.

Claudio Huepe, vice-president of the Christian Democratic Party, was admitted to hospital bleeding from the eye after being struck in the face by a water cannon jet.

Police said three of their officers were slightly hurt in the disturbances, which spread to two university campuses.

Human rights activist quits Haitian junta

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R) — Human rights activist Gerard Gourgue, generally seen as the most popular member of Haiti's ruling junta, has resigned as justice minister in apparent despair over reviving the economy.

Looking strained, he left his post as justice minister and member of the ruling National Council Thursday night, saying the council lacked the means to satisfy the legitimate demands of the people.

Mr. Gourgue's resignation came at a critical time for the National Council. Violence has increased — the sound of gunshots ripped through the silence of the curfew Thursday night — and the public has been denouncing most council members.

"I've been considering resigning ever since Albert Pierre left

Haiti," 60-year-old Mr. Gourgue said in Creole.

Albert "Ti-Bonle" Pierre, 53, was Haiti's chief of police and a notorious leader of the Duvalier dynasty's private militia, the Tonton Macoutes.

Just before President Jean-Paul Duvalier's fall last month, he fired Pierre in a futile effort to quell public unrest.

Days after the new National Council took office on Feb. 7, Pierre was allowed to flee to Brazil where he was granted political asylum. Subsequently, Brazil reversed its position and said it would respond positively to any Haitian demand for Pierre's extradition.

Mr. Gourgue boycotted the ceremony celebrating the unfurling of Haiti's new flag on Feb. 25 to show his opposition.

Phnom Penh rejects rebel peace plan

BANGKOK (R) — The Kampuchean government in Phnom Penh Friday joined Vietnam in rejecting a peace formula proposed by the guerrilla Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK).

The Hanoi-backed People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) said it was the sole master of the country.

"Why should the PRK... compromise or share power with a handful of criminal exiles living as outlaws on foreign handouts?" the Phnom Penh government said in a dispatch carried by its SPK news agency monitored in Bangkok.

It dismissed the U.N.-recognised CGDK, which includes non-Communists loyal to

Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Son Sann, as a mask for the Khmer Rouge, third and most powerful partner in the coalition.

"It is unthinkable that these gangs should have rights to speak about any peace plan for Kampuchea," the PRK said.

The Vietnamese Communist Party newspaper Nhan Dan said Thursday the CGDK proposal failed to address internal as well as international aspects of political settlement of the Kampuchean conflict.

Hanoi and Phnom Penh have said an internal political solution is impossible until the Khmer Rouge is disbanded as a military and political force.

The Khmer Rouge, toppled from power by Vietnamese troops,

is widely accused of killing huge numbers of people when it ruled Kampuchea between April 1975 and January 1979.

Nhan Dan said that agreement for withdrawal of the 160,000 or more Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea must be accompanied by an end to weapons supplies to the guerrillas, their use of Thai sanctuaries and foreign intervention in Kampuchean affairs.

The coalition plan calls for a ceasefire, a two-phase Vietnamese troop withdrawal, formation of a CGDK-PRK four-party government of national reconciliation with Sihanouk as president and Son Sann as premier, followed by elections.

The ceasefire, troop pullout and elections would be supervised by the United Nations.

File exonerates Waldheim of Nazi links

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — Former U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim said Friday that a personal file found after a search of Foreign Ministry records exonerated him of ties with the Nazis in his youth.

Mr. Waldheim said on an Austrian radio programme that the file supported his previous statements that he had taken part in riding exhibitions with the NS Riding Corps, which was later affiliated with Hitler's Sturm Abteilung (Storm Troopers), but that he was never a member of the Nazi group.

The abbreviation NS stands for National Socialist, which is shortened in German as Nazi.

"The riding corps was not an SA organisation, nor did it impart membership in it," said Mr. Waldheim, a candidate for president in the May 4 election.

Waldheim's office said a document in the file contained a questionnaire he had filled out in 1945, when he was applying for a job in the Foreign Ministry, Austrian television reported late Thursday.

In the questionnaire, Mr. Waldheim listed membership in the riding group, the report said.

The World Jewish Congress, the New York Times newspaper and Austria's Profil news magazine have cited other documents showing that Mr. Waldheim was listed as a member of the brown-shirted SA in 1938. Mr. Waldheim has said the listing was a bureaucratic mistake, probably due to his membership in the Riding Corps.

Prospective public servants were routinely investigated for Nazi ties in the postwar years, and Mr. Waldheim has maintained that files of his investigations cleared him at that time.

But a week ago, ministry officials said the 1945-1970 part of

stionnaire he had filled out in 1945, when he was applying for a job in the Foreign Ministry, Austrian television reported late Thursday.

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But a week ago, ministry officials said the 1945-1970 part of

Mr. Waldheim's file was missing from their archives. The ministry said Monday that the missing papers had been found, locked away in a file cabinet that had not been used for years.

"The NS Rider Corps did not belong to the NSDAP, but was an independent, self-standing organisation of the consular academy," Mr. Waldheim was quoted as saying in the daily Neue Kronen Zeitung.

It was later automatically incorporated into the SA, like the Catholic Riding Club and the Kampagnenreiter, "a society riding club, Mr. Waldheim was quoted as saying.

The Consular Academy was a training school for the Austrian diplomatic service, where Mr. Waldheim studied. NSDAP is the abbreviation for National Socialist German Worker's Party, the full name of the Nazi Party.

future princess said.

Her fiancé said he would continue a naval career. He is now a lieutenant and helicopter pilot, having served in Britain's 1982 war with Argentina over the Falkland Islands.

The announcement of the engagement came Wednesday from Buckingham Palace, ending weeks of speculation that Queen Elizabeth's second son had finally chosen a bride.

"It is with the greatest pleasure that the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh announce the betrothal of their beloved son, Prince Andrew, to Miss Sarah Ferguson, daughter of Maj. Ronald Ferguson and Mrs. Hector Ferguson," read a notice posted on the palace gates.

No precise date has been set for the ceremony but Prince Andrew said on television: "We would like it to be in the summer, if possible.... I would like to get on with it and get it out of the way."

Diana was not the matchmaker — Ferguson

SYDNEY (R) — The father of Britain's royal bride-to-be, Sarah Ferguson, Friday denied that Princess Diana had acted as a matchmaker in his daughter's romance with Prince Andrew.

Maj. Ronald Ferguson told reporters after arriving here for a two-week visit he was proud of the way his daughter had survived weeks of unrelenting pressure from the media in the run-up to Wednesday's engagement announcement.

"She's held her head up high, and she's answered any questions which have been put to her without making any comment at all, which is quite a difficult thing to do," he said.

Ferguson, who will be staying here with his eldest daughter Jane, 28, and umpiring a series of polo matches, disagreed with suggestions that Princess Diana had brought the couple together but said the two women were great

friends and Diana's experience had helped Sarah.

"No, I don't see Princess Diana as a matchmaker at all, nor as Sarah's guiding hand," he said.

"Sarah's the type of person if she wants advice she'll ask for it and she'll ask for the best advice she can get."

Sarah returned to work Thursday after taking Wednesday off for the official announcement of her engagement to Prince Andrew.

Sarah arrived at the graphic design business where she works as a sales executive. A police escort led by the prince's official bodyguard accompanied her to the office in the expensive Mayfair district of London.

In the royal couple's first official interview at Buckingham Palace Wednesday Sarah made clear that she planned to continue her career.

"I have a job to do and I'm going to keep on working," the

Ershad, opposition seek compromise over elections

DHAKA (Agencies) — Opposition and government leaders in Bangladesh held secret talks Friday to try to reach a compromise over parliamentary elections planned for April 26, sources from the two sides said.

They said that if the intense negotiations were successful the opposition Awami League could change its policy and take part in the elections.

"We are trying our best to work out a modus vivendi at this 11th hour," an opposition leader, who preferred not to be named, told Reuters.

An aide to President Hossain Mohammad Ershad said the talks followed a long telephone discussion Thursday night between Gen. Ershad and the Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed.

He did not give details, but said the conversation cleared the way for the opposition to participate in the polls.

Main opposition parties have called a national strike Saturday as the first phase of a campaign to stop the elections. They claim the polls would be a farce because they would be manipulated under martial law in favour of the pro-government Jatiya Party.

Gen. Ershad has reaffirmed his pledge to go ahead with the election and warned that he would not tolerate any attempt to delay the restoration of democracy.

"I am determined to hold elections on schedule and anyone trying to stop it will be resisted," he told a public rally outside Dhaka Thursday.

"Now it is time for everyone to realise that the country cannot be ruled under martial law permanently."

Meanwhile, a bomb was thrown Thursday night into the residence of a government party candidate for April 26 parliamentary elections, but there were no reported injuries, police said.

Police in the south western port city of Khulna said Friday that security guards had been deployed to the home of Mohammad Ahmad, a National Party candidate, and other candidates in the city.

Khulna is considered a stronghold of the opposition which is boycotting the parliamentary poll, already postponed three times in the past two years because of opposition demands that Gen. Ershad end his military rule.

House defeats Reagan's bid for \$100m Contra aid

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President Reagan has suffered a major setback in his bid to win new aid for Nicaraguan rebels but House of Representatives vote was only part of what could become a lengthy war with Congress.

Mr. Reagan described the 222-210 House vote as "a dark day for freedom" and pledged to redouble efforts to gain congressional approval of \$70 million in military aid and \$30 million in other supplies for the so-called Contra rebels fighting the Nicaraguan government.

The American people and the Contras, Mr. Reagan declared, had his "solemn determination to come back, again and again, until this battle is won, until freedom is given the chance it deserves in Nicaragua."

Mr. Reagan asserts that Nicaragua is bent on destabilising Central America and exporting Communist revolution. Managua denies this.

The Nicaraguan embassy hailed the vote as a "positive step" in a statement which added:

"It is the hope of the people and government of Nicaragua that this vote marks the beginning of a new U.S. policy in which peaceful negotiations will take precedence over military solutions that bring only death and needless destruction."

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said the U.S. House of Representatives' rejection of the aid to anti-government rebels

would not lessen the conflict in Central America.

"A vote against does not signify that the war has ended," Mr. Ortega said Thursday.

"We are threatened," Mr. Ortega added. "Reagan has spoken of using military advisers. This is the beginning of the Vietnamisation of the conflict."

When asked to comment on the debate in Washington over aid to the rebels, known as Contras, the president said:

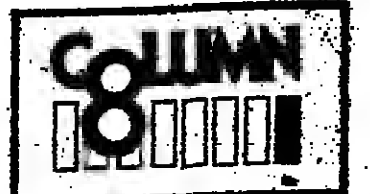
"We have insisted that these discussions are illegal and immoral, that they go against international public opinion and normal diplomatic relations."

Mr. Ortega repeated earlier remarks that he would not meet with the Contras, a move that the United States has linked to resuming bilateral talks with the Sandinistas.

However, he did say he was willing to meet with the "chief of the Contras — President Reagan."

The official Soviet News Agency TASS said Friday that a House of Representatives vote against President Reagan's proposal to aid Nicaraguan rebels was a vote against a policy of "institutionalised terrorism."

Mr. Reagan's defeat "was primarily due to the fact that many lawmakers had willy-nilly to consider the sentiments of their electors, the majority of whom, as public opinion polls showed, oppose the extension of U.S. armed interference in Central America."



Lottery win sends man to his death

BELGRADE (R) — Yugoslav policeman Sasa Miki, 27, went to a bar to celebrate after winning 20 million dinars (\$61,000) in a lottery at Smederevo, near Belgrade. He ordered drinks all round, lurching out of the bar and was killed by a passing lorry. He leaves a widow and a three-year-old son, Tanjug New Agency reported.

Lebanese militia to close down casinos

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's Christian "Lebanese Forces" militia has banned private casinos and will close down 12 gambling places it controls in Beirut, a militia source has said. The source said the ban on the clubs, the main ones in Christian east Beirut, would take effect on April 1. After that, gambling would be restricted to the state-licensed Casino Du Liban, he said.

Bride's family batter groom over skimpy wedding feast

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — The wedding was delayed while bride's family punched and pummelled the groom for providing a meagre wedding feast. They claimed saying the chapatis he supplied were an insult after large dowry they handed over. The ceremony in north west Perak state finally went ahead after guests called the angry relatives, the national news agency Bernama said.

Nancy Reagan unhurt in airport mishap

WASHINGTON (R) — A U.S. Air Force passenger jet with President Reagan's wife, Nancy, aboard slipped off the runway at an Atlanta airport but Mrs. Reagan was unhurt, the White House said. It said the incident occurred at the airport in Fulton County, Georgia, as Mrs. Reagan was returning to Washington from a conference on drug abuse. The plane was disabled and a smaller passenger jet was sent from Washington to pick up Mrs. Reagan.

Farmer kills himself, family in protest

NEW DELHI (R) — An Indian farmer strangled his wife and four children, and then killed himself by drinking insecticide to protest government farm policies, the Press Trust of India (PTI) has reported. Police in western Maharashtra state said Sashrao Shesrao Patil left no notes criticising the government policies and saying he was committing suicide to dramatise the plight of Indian farmers, PTI said.

Photographer held for nude photo session in cathedral

BOGOTA (R) — An Argentine photographer has been detained in Colombia for shooting nude pictures of a female model in an underground cathedral, officials have said. Photographer Angel Becassino and his model, Flor Alba Devia, both face up to a year in prison if convicted of "profanation of a sacred place," said Hernando Garcia